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TRADE UNIONISM IN DISTRICT 18, 1900-1925: A CASE STUDY

by



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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and  
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,  
a thesis entitled Trade Unionism in District 18, 1900-1925:  
A Case Study, submitted by Charles J. McMillan in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Business Administration



This thesis examines the history of trade unionism in the coal industry of Western Canada during the period 1900-1925. Attention is focused on the heavy strike activity throughout the period in terms of the issues which evolved in the various strikes, and the evolution of collective bargaining, conciliation clauses and settlement of grievances during the life of the contract.

Detailed examination of trade unionism in the area known as District 18, namely British Columbia, Alberta, and certain areas of Saskatchewan, treats the formation of the Western Federation of Miners, the United Mine Workers of America, the One Big Union, and the Mine Workers Union of Canada. The goals and policies of each of these unions, the conflict between rival unions, and the importance of personality factors are emphasized throughout. Extensive use is made of hitherto unpublished papers, documents, and correspondence of the United Mine Workers and the minute books of the Western Coal Operators' Association.

The study concludes that two major factors resulted in the heavy strike activity in the coal industry: firstly, the environmental factors which influenced labour relations; and secondly, the nature of the rival trade unions, competing for allegiance of the workman. The environmental factors were examined in the light of a) the economics of the coal industry; b) the social conditions of the coal communities; and c) the legal and political problems facing labour unions. The nature of rival trade unionism was treated according to a) relationship between local union and parent organization; b) evolution of issues which accompanied strike activity; and c) attitudes towards collective negotiations and the conciliation process.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Finally and most importantly, I am grateful to my parents, who have done more for me than I can ever say, and to whom I respectfully dedicate this study.



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# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview of the Study

Broadly speaking, trade unions in Canada can be classified as "national" unions, which are all-Canadian, and "international" unions, which are American unions having jurisdiction in Canada. This study examines the history of trade unionism in an industry where both kinds of unionism existed, and where violent conflict between the two opposing forces appeared.

The primary focus of attention in this thesis is the history of labour conflict within District 18, United Mine Workers of America, during the period 1900-1925. Unionism in this period began at the turn of the century with the formation of independent locals and the Western Federation of Miners. Subsequent to a series of unsuccessful strikes sponsored by the Western Federation, the United Mine Workers of America entered the area and established District 18 in the coal mines of Alberta and British Columbia.

The growth and development of District 18 continued until the First World War. Strong dissatisfaction with UMW leadership and discontent resulting from rising price levels forced the Federal Government to intervene in wage negotiations and led to the appointment of a Director of Coal Operations. After the War, rebellion and radicalism combined to force the breakup of District 18 and the return to small independent locals. Some attempts were made to form a Canadian union of coal miners, but these were largely unsuccessful.

During the 1900-1925 period, there were four mines which competed for the allegiance of the coal miners in the Western coal industry. Firstly, there was the Western Federation of Miners, founded in Butte, Montana.



A radical socialist union, it first entered the Western coal fields in 1895 at Rossland, B.C., and gained enough members to form District 6. However, after several unsuccessful strikes in 1903, the Federation withdrew from the coal fields and confined its activities to the metaliferous miners. In 1916, the WFM became the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

The second union in the western coal fields was the United Mine Workers of America, which first formed locals in 1903 and which later became District No. 18. The UMW was an industrial union, and opposed the radical tendencies of the Western Federation. The UMW concentrated on collective bargaining procedures, union security and wage benefits, improvement in working conditions--in general, conservative business union principles. In this fashion, the UMW was a market union and differed from the WFM, which was almost a social class movement in its early years.

Shortly after the First World War, several labour union leaders from Western Canada formed a radical movement known as the One Big Union, which attempted to organize the wage workers not according to industry, as the UMW had done, but according to class and class needs. Through the efforts of several leaders in the United Mine Workers, the coal miners voted to reject the industrial union and to join the One Big Union. The Binational Executive of the UMW revoked the charter of District 18 because of the miners' affiliation in the OBU, and the few locals remaining with the UMWA were operated by a special commission until 1921.

However, the One Big Union failed to secure the wage gains that its leaders had promised, and the coal miners decided to abandon their affiliation and either rejoin the United Mine Workers or establish independent locals to make separate contracts with the coal companies. Eventually,



some of these independent locals attempted to organize a Canadian union, which became known as the Mine Workers Union of Canada. This body was unable to make an agreement with the coal companies with a standard wage scale, so that by 1929, many of the breakaway locals rejoined District 18. In 1936, the remaining coal miners voted to disband the MWUC and to rejoin the United Mine Workers, and by 1938, the UMW became the bargaining agent for almost all the miners in Alberta and British Columbia.

Like the miners, the coal operators had their own organization. Until the formation of District 18, contract negotiations took place either between the individual coal miner and the company, or between an independent local and the company. After the organization and development of District 18, the principal coal companies in southern Alberta and British Columbia formed the Western Coal Operators' Association, which eventually included most of the operators in the area comprising District 18.

The formation of the Coal Operators' Association and the development of District 18 led to district-wide collective bargaining and a single contract with common working conditions and standardized wage scales. Throughout the period considered in this study, negotiations between these two parties were supplemented by government officials and independent mediators. However, with the breakup of District 18 after the war, district wide agreements ended and the operators disbanded their Association in 1925. Individual operators signed contracts with small organizations like the Edmonton and District Miners' Federation and the Red Deer Valley Miners' union, but for the most part, district wide bargaining did not reoccur until the resurgence of the United Mine Workers in 1936 and the formation of the Western Canada Bituminous Coal Operators' Association in 1937.





## The Nature of Binational Unionism

Binational Unionism in this study refers to national unions that charter locals in both Canada and the United States.<sup>1</sup> This kind of unionism first started in Canada before Confederation in 1867 when the Montreal moulders union joined the U.S. National Moulders Union; shortly after, the moulders in Toronto affiliated with the same body. This pattern spread to other crafts and industries and started the phenomenon, unique in the world, of binational unionism.<sup>2</sup>

Binational Unionism, according to one study, was the result primarily of two factors: firstly, the extension of product and labour markets over the international boundary; and secondly, the superior development of the trade union movement in the United States which afforded an established and proven system of protection.<sup>3</sup>

On a wider perspective, the development of binational unionism in Canada led to a long standing dispute between proponents of unions with North American jurisdiction and proponents of purely Canadian unionism. This conflict came as a result of three types of issues: a) grievances against the binational unions; b) opposition to the American Federation of Labour type of unionism; and c) conflict over Canadian and American labours' economic interests.<sup>4</sup>

An important factor in considering the question of binational

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of binational unionism and the use of this term, see John Crispo, International Unionism (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 23-33.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada (Social Publications, 1966), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> C. Brian Williams, "Canadian American Trade Union Relations--A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1964), p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



unionism is the environment of the two countries where it developed. Canada and the United States have similar social, economic, and cultural backgrounds and both countries have developed industrial economies in much the same manner. The Williams' thesis elaborates on three environmental factors which have flowed out of Canadian and American economic and social relations.<sup>5</sup> These three factors were Canadian-American trade relations, the intermingling of the Canadian and American peoples (labour migration), and the participation of American capital in Canadian industrialism. These characteristics have led not only to the extension of labour and product markets which have shaped the character of Canadian-American trade union relations, but also to the formation of binational unions.

Structure of the Binational Union.<sup>6</sup> The structure of an organization such as a trade union gives its membership unity of purposes and development of bargaining rights through its collective strength. Because the major portion of this study deals with the United Mine Workers of America, some attention is given here to the structure of the union and the nature of its operation. As an industrial union, the United Mine Workers established the pattern of industrial unionism in North America, and most trade unions in mass production industries adopted the UMW structure.<sup>7</sup>

The basic unity of the UMW was the district organization, of which there became 30 in number--three were Canadian. These districts were

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<sup>5</sup> Williams, pp. 29-79. See also, C. Brian Williams, "The Development of Canadian-American Trade Union Relations," Industrial Relations, Vol. 21, No. 3, April 1966, pp. 332-355.

<sup>6</sup> Portions of the following were taken from Louis Bloch, Labour Agreements in Coal Mines (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1931), pp. 43-70.

<sup>7</sup> Harold Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto: MacMillan, 1948), pp. 193-194.



chartered by the Binational Union, and were under its jurisdiction. The district officers, elected by the rank and file workers, included the officers of President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, an executive board member, and tellers. In every district, this executive board was the judicial authority between meetings of the district conventions. Four members of the Executive were full-salaried employees of the union, namely the president, the vice-president, the secretary-treasurer and the binational board member.

The district organization was divided into sub-districts, although not all districts are thus divided. The principal criterion used in forming a sub-district was the number of local unions working under approximately the same mining conditions, such as the thickness or thinness of the coal seam. The number of members within the district was not a factor in determining sub-districts, and in some cases, such as Western Pennsylvania and Indiana, the sole purpose in forming sub-districts is to elect a district board member from each district.<sup>8</sup> In District 18, however, the representative of each sub-district was not elected, but appointed by the District Executive.

The smallest unit within the union was the local, which embraced the union membership among the employees of one mine, or when the mines were very small, two or more mines combined to form one union. Each local was designated a certain number for identification. The local, like the District, received a charter from the Binational and had its own executive elected by the local membership. Most locals adopted a contribution for its administration, although its laws could not conflict with the rulings

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<sup>8</sup> Bloch, p. 46.





of the sub-districts, districts, or Binational constitutions. The local could penalize its own members and debar applicants from membership, although a miner was able to make appeals to higher units, any of which could reverse the decision of the lower unit. Moreover, any decision made by the local could be reversed by a higher unit, in consecutive order, if it is considered detrimental to the interests of the Binational.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of a strong organization in the local union increased after the district-wide agreement signed in 1907.<sup>10</sup> One of the clauses in that contract, retained in subsequent agreements, provided for settlement of grievances through specified conciliation procedures, starting with a "pit committee" or the miners and proceeding towards higher officials.

The Binational Union was run by an Executive Board, consisting of one member from each district (the International Board member, elected by the district membership), the president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer. The Executive Board executed the instructions of the annual conventions and directed the general operations of the union. The Board could convene by order of the president or by the secretary-treasurer on the request of a majority of its members. Furthermore, it could recommend strike action by a two-thirds vote, but ratification was necessary by the membership in all local unions.

The union was financed through monthly membership dues, which have varied through the years. In District 18, the locals retained a fixed proportion for specific needs, usually medical services and social needs,

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<sup>9</sup> It was this clause of the Binational constitution that empowered the Binational President to revoke the district charter when the District Executive became active in the One Big Union. See Chapter VII, infra.

<sup>10</sup> For a listing of the thirty districts of the UMWA, their location, and the number of locals comprising each district, see Appendix.



such as a union hall. The remainder of the dues were turned over to the District organization, which in turn sent the District assessment to the Binational headquarters in Washington. The principal purpose of the monies collected was to build up a strike fund and to pay the administrative salaries of District officials. District 18 financed intermittently its own newspaper, the District Ledger.

### Purposes of the Study

This study has three main purposes: a) to examine in detail the relationship between the local union and the binational or national union, and as a corollary, to determine the importance of union leadership in the development of the district union, b) to contribute to an understanding of the role unions played in establishing collective bargaining procedures in the coal industry, and the attitudes adopted towards conciliation and grievance procedures, and c) to examine the evolution of issues involved in the bargaining process which accompanied such heavy strike activity in the coal industry.

Unlike some industries, such as the automobile and iron and steel industries, the coal industry of Canada saw several unions vying for allegiance of the workers. In the evolution and history of the various unions different issues were involved, and the importance of certain leaders and personalities cannot be underestimated. In District 18, the limited studies of the coal industry have not examined in detail the kinds of issues which accompanied the progress or failure of the particular unions, nor the significance of the union personalities.

Again, unlike some industries, the unions in the coal industry played an influential role in the establishment of collective bargaining procedures, and actually formulated the grievance procedures adopted during



the life of the contract. Perhaps quite naturally, the United Mine Workers played a more significant and creative role during the first decade, for example, before 1914 when the union was most interested in improving working conditions, standardizing wage scales, and instituting safety regulations throughout the industry. After this period, union leadership weakened perceptibly, and the role of the union in forcing improvement in these issues weakened accordingly.

The coal industry exhibited a strong propensity to strike action throughout the period of this study. During these strikes, various issues accompanied the bargaining process and played a key factor in the success or failure of the strike. Broadly speaking, when the union was first established, the principal issues included union recognition and wage increases. As the union became more established and collective negotiation procedures were adopted, as in district-wide bargaining, the principal issues were improvements in working conditions, conciliation procedures during the life of the contract, and the closed shop and check-off clauses in the district agreement.

Two other factors emerged which had important consequences on union-management relations in the coal industry. The first was the extent of strike aid given the District union by the Binational union, and the second was the state of the general economic conditions existing throughout the country. From the union point of view, large strike aid and generally stable conditions were necessary for success in maintaining a strong front against the coal operators. When unstable economic conditions worsened during the First World War, the United Mine Workers union was saved by the favourable treatment of the Director of Coal Operations. However, when limited strike aid was forced on the union after the war, together





with the continued unstable economic conditions in the form of falling price levels and lack of new markets for Western coal, the UMW could not maintain the allegiance of the mine workers and radicalism and rebellion disrupted industrial union procedures and led to the breakup of District 18.

#### Note on Methodology

This study combines the descriptive, analytical, and interpretative approach to labour history. The focus of the project is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the environmental influences affecting the Western coal industry at the turn of the century through to 1925 which shaped the values, goals, and power orientation of the Western Federation of Miners, and how its failure to respond adequately to these influences paved the way for the activities of the United Mine Workers. Moreover, emphasis is placed on some of the personalities involved in the struggle in terms of, for example, the 1903 strikes and how locals were established and strikes fought under the UMW auspices. The environmental influences which receive most attention include a) the economic and political climate in the industry of British Columbia and Alberta, and b) the legal and technical problems facing organized labour in establishing the district union.

Part II focuses on the organization of the United Mine Workers and the development of a District Union structure. The rebellions within the ranks, the role of leadership among the union officers, and the part played by the Binational organization in the internal affairs of the district receive major attention. Inasmuch as the system of collective bargaining is itself one of the first established in Canada, attention is given to the initiative taken by the union to establish a) grievance procedures during the life of the contract, b) closed shop clauses, c) mediation clauses,





d) renegotiation clauses at the termination of the contract, and e) the role of government mediators. A special chapter examines the socio-economic aspects of the coal mining communities and the nature of industrial working conditions.

The third part of the study looks at the discontent and rebellion within District Union ranks, and the eventual break up of District 18. Emphasis is given to a) the desire for an all Canadian union, b) the role played by the UMW miners to establish the One Big Union and ultimately various minor regional unions, c) the attempts made by the Binational Union through John L. Lewis and Robert Livett to reorganize the United Mine Workers in District 18, and d) the break up of the Western Coal Operators' Association and the return to company unionism in District 18.

#### Sources of Data

Material on the original unionization attempts by the Western Federation of Miners and the early activities of the United Mine Workers are taken from the labor press, particularly the United Mine Workers Journal. However, because many of the events which took place within the district are not treated in the Binational Journals, correspondence of the Operators and the union, as well as minute books, convention proceedings, and the local press supplement these sources to provide an accurate and unbiased interpretation of the strikes.

Further extensive use is made of the several Royal Commissions, both provincial and federal, which were appointed to investigate union conflict in the district. Another basic source is The Labour Gazette, the monthly bulletin of the Federal Department of Labour.

#### Relationship of This Study to Other Studies

The only study which is closely related to this project is that of



Dr. C. Brian Williams, "Canadian-American Trade Union Relations: A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism." This work treats the United Mine Workers in western Canada as one of three case studies to discover a) the causes and motives behind International Trade Unionism, b) the nature of the opposition expressed by Canadian unions against the Binational Union movement, and c) the type of issues which have accompanied Binational Union activities in Canada.

The years treated in the Williams' study on District 18 include 1903-1909, 1918-1921, with intermittent sketches of the intervening years. Most general works of Canadian labour history have treated the activities of the United Mine Workers in terms of the Western Federation of Miners in 1903, the Lethbridge strike and the resulting Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act, 1906, and the One Big Union, 1919. However, because the background of the UMW has never been fully documented and reported, some of the interpretations are questionable.



## Chapter II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CANADIAN COAL INDUSTRY

The principal coal fields of Canada are located in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the East, and in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and the Yukon in the West. In all the coal fields of the Dominion are estimated to cover about 97,000 square miles, not including large tracts which are known in the far north where commercial development has not yet taken place.

In 1901 Canada's coal production of 6,486,325 tons stood next to gold as the most valuable mineral product mined in the country.<sup>1</sup> Coal output showed a steady increase after Confederation in 1867. Prior to that year, total production amounted to only three million tons, of which three-quarters came from the Maritimes. Since 1867, the gradual increase in production resulted almost entirely from the development of the coal fields in the Western provinces. Production in Nova Scotia dates from the 1870's and in the West from the 1890's.

Canada, at the turn of the century, was at once both a large importer and a large exporter of coal. There was two main reasons for this situation. First, there was the fact that in the West, high transportation charges made it impossible for mines in Alberta and British Columbia to service profitably the coal markets of Ontario and Quebec, where almost no coal was produced. Moreover, lack of adequate railway facilities in some areas meant that Canadian producers in the West could not move coal to the East, but could sell in American markets in Washington, California, and other Pacific coast states. Secondly, almost no anthracite

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<sup>1</sup> "Coal Production and Supply in Canada," Labour Gazette, Vol. 3, No. 5, November 1902, p. 326. Hereinafter referred to as LG.





coal was mined in Canada, which meant that in 1901, imports of anthracite amounted to 2,024,383 tons. That same year, 3,135,158 tons of bituminous coal were imported, so that of a total of 9,334,725 tons of coal consumed in Canada, about half was imported.<sup>2</sup>

In 1875, Canada exported about 25 percent of the coal produced, but by 1900, exports amounted to 35 percent of output. After 1900, exports continued to fall as a percentage of production--to 20 percent in 1910, 15 percent in 1920, and 4 percent in 1930.<sup>3</sup>

While coal exports fell drastically, imports remained remarkably high--between 50 and 60 percent of domestic consumption. Two of the outstanding difficulties of the Canadian coal industry have been the inability of domestic producers firstly, to raise coal consumption in Canada in the face of intense competition from alternate fuels, particularly fuel oil, and secondly, to replace imports with domestic production.

#### Characteristics, Markets, and Locations of Western Coal Fields<sup>4</sup>

It is a question of great uncertainty as who was the first discoverer of coal in Western Canada. One man, Edward Unfreville, a furtrader, writer, and clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company, mentioned having observed coal in 1773. Later, David Thompson, by locating the position of Unfreville's house fixed the founding as being near Fort Pitt on the Saskatchewan River.

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<sup>2</sup> "The Coal Trade of Canada," LG, Ibid., p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> For statistics giving the origin of coal for Canadian consumption 1902-1944, see Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup> Excerpts of the following were taken from Hugh Hamilton Beach, "The Geology of the Coal Seams of Edmonton and District, and a History of its Mining Development," (M.Sc. Thesis, Department of Science, University of Alberta, April, 1934) pp. 12-34; D.B. Dowling, "The Coal Fields of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Eastern British Columbia," Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey Branch, 1909; and Robert Strachan, "Coal Mines in British Columbia," Canadian Mining and Metallurgy Transactions, Vol. 26, 1923, pp. 270-323.



Alexander MacKenzie recorded a finding of coal on August 2, 1789 during his explorations into the Canadian West, and noted it in his "Voyages" in 1795 and in his journals in 1801. A copy of MacKenzie's map, published the same year, and a later version in 1881, show coal deposits on the Red Deer River. Discovery of coal in the Drumheller area was made on an exploration trip undertaken by Peter Fidler, a surveyor for the Hudson's Bay Company. Sir George Simpson was the first man to record finding coal in the Edmonton area, later confirmed by Sir John Richardson. Captain Blackstone of the Captain James Palliser Expedition of 1857-1860 went into the Crow's Nest Pass and Kootenay Pass areas and found large coal deposits while Palliser himself travelled in the Canmore and Anthacite areas of Alberta southwest of Calgary. The journals of these explorations and findings were published in 1863.

Nicholas Sheran opened the first mine in the west in 1872 not far from the present site of Lethbridge. In Edmonton Rev. George MacDonald brought the first settlers in 1871 and claimed land for his church and himself. New settlers were attracted to the area, and recordings exist of people mining coal for their own use by 1874.<sup>5</sup> By this time, numerous coal deposits had been observed in many other areas of the west. The discovery of gold in Caribou in 1850 brought large numbers of people to the northwest, which naturally led to further geological surveys. With the construction of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways, there arose a commercial need for coal in the late 1870's and early 1880's. Prior to this time, little commercial mining was attempted. In 1882 coal was supplied to Hudson's Bay Steamers, and it was proposed that a company

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<sup>5</sup> Beach, p. 16.



be organized to ship coal to Winnipeg, but sufficient capital was not forthcoming and the idea was abandoned.

One of the first mines to be put into commercial production was at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. The mine was operated by the Hudson's Bay Company, with James Douglas, the company's Chief Factor on the Coast, supervising operations. By the end of 1852, 1840 tons of coal had been exported, and soon ships were regularly transporting shipments from Nanaimo to Victoria, and San Francisco.<sup>6</sup> In 1856, the Nanaimo Coal Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company, began to develop bigger collieries and imported Scottish miners, among them being Robert Dunsmuir. He had refused to go out on strike with other miners in 1855 and for his loyalty was given a grant of 1000 acres in the Nanaimo fields. This was the start of what was to become the great Dunsmuir coal empire.

The coal areas of Western Canada can best be described according to their location. The coal mining industry of Alberta included the principal mines operating in the Inner Foothills belt; the mines in Coalspur and Saunders areas of the Outer foothills; and the mines in the Drumheller, Lethbridge, and Edmonton areas.

Conditions in the Inner foothills belt varied considerably. The seams were thick and changed greatly even within short distances. In these areas, coal was mainly bituminous, the market was primarily for railway and industrial use, and the bituminous companies were commonly called "steam" coal operators. In the Lethbridge areas production was used mainly for domestic purposes and the mines were seriously affected by seasonal fluctuations in demand as they catered to residential consumption. Most mines were closed from the end of March to mid-September, or were running

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Philips, No Power Greater, (Vancouver: Boag Foundation, 1967), p. 3.





at best on twenty-five percent production. Several of the mines in the Edmonton and Drumheller areas were strip mines, and the fields were characterized by a large number of small operators.

Production in Alberta increased from virtually nothing prior to 1880 to about 340,275 tons in 1901 and 4,306,346 tons in 1913, due almost exclusively to the construction and expansion of railroads. The railway lines, the Canadian Pacific in the 1880's, the Grand Trunk Pacific in 1910, and the Canadian Northern Railway in 1913, developed transportation to new markets and provided a large market in themselves.

The first mine to be opened up on a commercial scale in Alberta was at Medicine Hat in 1883, and new collieries started at Lethbridge in 1886 and at Canmore in 1888.

In Assiniboia, the Belley River fields had lignites of good quality, while the Lethbridge collieries and the Canadian Anthracite Coal Company's collieries at Canmore and Anthracite were especially important as the one area in Canada where coal suitable for domestic use and grading to the necessary percentage of carbon was mined for consumption.<sup>7</sup> The output from these mines in 1901 was 14,742 and 88,499 tons respectively which was 5,742 tons more than in 1900. The Lethbridge collieries increased production in 1901 to 217,034 tons compared with 181,801 tons in 1900.<sup>8</sup> There were three principal coal areas in British Columbia supplying the bulk of the fuel for export and for domestic consumption. The first, Vancouver Island, included Nanaimo extending southeast from Departure Bay in the southeastern section of the Island, and the Comox district, lying to the

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<sup>7</sup> LG, "Coal Production and Supply in Canada," p. 365.

<sup>8</sup> For statistics giving Alberta coal production from 1886-1927, see tables in Appendix.





northwest of the Nanaimo field.

The second major area was in the Crow's Nest Pass situated on the western side of the Rocky Mountains in the extreme southeastern section of the province. This area was first mentioned as having extensive coal fields by a Hudson's Bay Company trader named Michael Philips in 1873, and he returned a year later with three prospectors and reported deposits of coal to be found everywhere throughout the Pass. The area was developed for commercial use when the branch line of the Canadian Pacific Railway passed through the Pass about 1890.

A third area to be opened was the Nicola-Similkameen area situated in the central and southern portions of the province. Coal in this area was mentioned in accounts as early as 1877, but commercial production did not commence until 1907, when about 11,000 tons were produced. Difficulties in mining the coal and long distances from the central markets hindered development in this field.

By 1901, coal production in British Columbia amounted to 1,460,331 tons valued at \$4,380,993, compared with 1,439,595 tons mined in 1900. About eighty-six percent of the total British Columbia output came from the coast mines, or 1,261,744 tons of coal and 15,398 tons of coke, compared with 198,587 tons of coal and 111,683 tons of coke for the mountain mines.<sup>9</sup>

British Columbia exported a total of 1,004,116 tons of coal, of which 413,705 tons was for consumption in Canada, 985,197 tons went to the United States, and 18,966 tons went to other countries. About 80,154 tons of British Columbia coke were sold in Canada, and 47,379 tons were

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 366. For statistics giving British Columbia coal production, 1836-1927, and British Columbia coal exports, 1873-1927, see tables in Appendix.



were sold in the United States. Most of the British Columbia coke output was consumed in the smelting centers of the Kootenay district, a market made available by the construction of a branch line of the CPR.

The Vancouver Island Coal Field. The first coal mining development in British Columbia took place on Vancouver Island, the oldest settled area of the province located off the west coast. As far back as 1835, Indian traders were bringing coal specimens to the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort McLoughlon on Millbank Sound. The officers of the Company soon realized the potential value of the product, because the following year, coal was being used on the first steamboat on the Pacific Coast, the Beaver. From a commercial point of view, however, it was doubtful whether enough deposits existed to support production. The Hudson's Bay Company later decided to bring in some experienced coal miners from Scotland in order to determine the size of the seams.<sup>10</sup> The arrival of the first Scottish miners from Staffordshire marked the beginning of the coal mining industry on the Island, on which was to bring wealth and stability to the area.

One of the settlers to arrive in 1851 was Robert Dunsmuir, who began shortly after to start prospecting for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Rupert. The Bay later sold its interests to the Vancouver Coal Company, and Dunsmuir was hired to open up the Harewood Mine. Later he directed his efforts in the Davis Lake district and opened mines for himself. When the Vancouver Coal Company fell into the hands of the Bank of British Columbia, Dunsmuir moved in to make the purchase, and bought out the interests of his partners, Lieutenant W.N. Diggle, Captain W.E. Egerton, and

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<sup>10</sup> Philips, p. 3.



Admiral Arthur Farquhar, who assisted him at Davis Lake. Now the Dunsmuir interests were predominant on the Island.

Dunsmuir acquired a grant of land, which included the coal rights, to build the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway. He consolidated his holdings in the Wellington Colliery Company, and started developing the Wellington mines, and later the Extension mines near Nanaimo, and the Union mines near Comox. The New Vancouver Coal mines controlled an area of about 43,000 acres, and these two companies became the pioneers in the coal industry on Vancouver Island.

By 1921 there were seven companies on Vancouver Island either mining or controlling major coal areas. However, the New Vancouver Coal Company, whose interests were transferred to the Western Fuel Corporation of Canada Limited, in the winter of 1902, and the Wellington Colliery Company, whose interests were transferred to the Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir), Limited in 1911 on the retirement of the Dunsmuir family, produced eight percent of the coal produced on the Island.<sup>11</sup>

Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) operated their mine at Extension in the Nanaimo district, together with the Western Fuel Corporation of Canada Limited, an American owned company selling most of its product in the American market; Granby Consolidated Mining Smelter, and Power Company; the Pacific Coast Coal Mines Limited; the Nanoose Wellington Collieries Limited; and the East Wellington Coal Company. The last two mines stopped working before 1921. The Dunsmuir mines were located near Extension in south Nanaimo and at Cumberland, just north of Nanaimo. These two mines were

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<sup>11</sup> Strachen, p. 276. See also, "Production and Employment in Coal in BC," LG, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 1902, p. 103 and Philips, op. cit., p. 6.





often referred to as Ladysmith mines and Union mines respectively.<sup>12</sup>

The total output of the coal mines on Vancouver Island for 1887 was 892,300 tons, of which 619,860 or about 70 percent was exported. In addition, 14,528 tons of coke were produced, with only 2,573 tons exported. By 1921, only 18 percent of production was exported, 290,713 tons out of a total of 1,625,902 tons of output. These figures show that the export trade lost considerable ground, and point out the great difficulty of obtaining and maintaining markets to ensure steady production and growth of the industry. Probably the biggest factor in retarding the development of the Vancouver Island coal industry was the introduction of fuel oil, mostly from California, to the province. It was estimated that fuel oil, used by the railways and for heating and power purposes, displaced about a million tons of coal, the production of which would give employment to about 3000 workmen.<sup>13</sup>

The Crow's Nest Pass Coal Field. By 1885, the Canadian Pacific Railroad had pushed its great construction program towards Port Moody, the agreed terminus with the federal government, although it was generally anticipated that the real terminus would be Granville (Vancouver). One of the areas to reap the early benefits of the railway boom was the Crow's Nest Pass coal fields. In 1875 the government of British Columbia authorized construction of a trail through the area, and the next eight years saw several officers of the Dominion Geological Department make studies of the coal field. In 1887, William Fernie, after whom the town of Fernie was named, and Lieutenant-Colonel Baker of Fort Steel started prospecting

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed description of the Western Fuel Corporation Mines, see Strachan, op. cit., pp. 277-282; for a description of the Dunsmuir holdings, see Strachan, op. cit., pp. 288-295.

<sup>13</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p. 295. See also "Coal Production and Supply in Canada," LG op. cit., p. 366.



the district and organized the Crow's Nest Coal and Mineral Company. Their work continued for almost eight years under great difficulties. It was in 1897, however, when the American owned Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company purchased the interests of the Fernie-Baker undertaking and systematic development of the area commenced. The following year, the company made arrangements with the CPR to extend their branch railway from MacLeod, Alberta to Kootenay Lake, a distance of about 150 miles. This railway extension, forming the present Crow's Nest Pass branch, was completed the following year, in 1899, and 9954 tons of coal were shipped. In the following year, coal output reached 103,000 tons, and 30,000 tons of fine coke were shipped to the smelting centers at Kootenay and Boundary.<sup>14</sup>

The Crow's Nest collieries were developed in three areas near Fernie. The first colliery to be opened was at Coal Creek, about five miles east of Fernie, at the junction of the Coal Creek and Elk Rivers. The coal here contained little foreign matter, and the good quality of coke produced by the Fernie ovens was one of the main factors in assisting the Trail smelters to reduce large tonnages of Rossland ore. Other smelters were established at Frand Forks, Greenwood, and Boundary Falls owing to the availability of Fernie coke.<sup>15</sup>

In 1898 the Company commenced work at Michel, located 24 miles north of Fernie and about eight miles west of the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The high quality of coal here was valued both for its steam producing qualities and for its production of excellent coke.

Shortly after the Michel colliery started, work began at Morrissey,

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<sup>14</sup> Strachan, op. cit., p. 272.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 314. For a more detailed account of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company mines, see Strachan, op. cit., pp. 312-323.



situated about 10 miles south-east of Fernie. Together the three mines, all operated by the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co., encompassed an area of approximately 200,000 acres. The Morrissey section experienced a great deal of trouble from blow outs of gas accompanied by fine coal, entailing a considerable loss of life. The coal was found to be too fine for a railway locomotive fuel and was not suitable for coking purposes. For all these reasons, the colliery was shut down in 1909, and in 1914, the CPR stopped producing in the Hosmer mines running parallel to the Elk River because of mining difficulties with the seams.<sup>16</sup>

Production of the Crow's Nest Coal Field reached the peak of its production output in 1910 when 1,365,000 tons were mined. After 1910, the production of both coal and coke decreased considerably. In 1911, output dropped to 759,755 tons, of which 85,644 tons were used in the production of coke. The use of fuel oil on the main lines of the railways and in many residential areas was one of the main reasons for the drop in coal production, and excessive freight rates to outside points prevented the extension of markets in other directions. The closing down of the smelters at Grand Forks and Greenwood, together with a curtailment of operations at the smelter in Northport, Washington, explain the reduced demand for coke.<sup>17</sup>

#### Early Labour Organizations: The Western Federation of Miners

The coal industry of Western Canada offers an interesting case study of binational unionism. The history of the industry and the development

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; for a more detailed description of the structure and character of the Canadian coal industry, see Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946.





of trade unionism is extremely complex, and as yet the complete record is still unrecorded. Few industries in Canada have experienced such turmoil and unrest as the coal industry. There were many reasons for this.

Firstly, there was the rivalry between competing binational unions, both at the beginning of the century and in 1919, and this tended to place severe strains on the labour relations of the industry. Secondly, there was the fact that the development of trade unionism in the coal industry was an outgrowth of union development in the United States. Thirdly, because of the heavy strike activity in the area, there developed a process of third party participation in the bargaining process which in many ways became a pattern for other industries.

Activity in the earliest trade unions probably dates from the labour troubles in the Dunsmuir empire in British Columbia, around 1861. Just five years after their arrival in 1855, the British miners at Hudson's Bay Company's subsidiary at Nanaimo walked out on strike against a company penalty tax of three pence per ton of clay-containing coal. The miners asked for an increase in pay of three pence, but after five days struggle, gave up the cause.<sup>18</sup> The first major strike of any duration took place at Nanaimo in 1870-1871 when the miners struck for five months. There was no official union representing the men, but a report in the Colonist stated that a delegation representing the strikers arrived in Victoria in February, 1871, to get aid for the men.

As the coal industry slowly started to develop and increase production, the miners began to protest against conditions in the mines and the wages paid the men. A strike was called at Wellington in 1877 where the

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<sup>18</sup> Philips, p. 5.





charged the Dunsmuir company of undercutting the standard rates of wages, at that time, \$1.20 a ton. A more serious charge was that the company used faulty scales and weights, or as one miner claimed at a protest meeting on February 26, 1877:

...the boxes which hold 1,100 lb., of coal would only weigh on the scales about 999, regardless of how high boxes were filled... They (the Wellington men) would not have struck had it not been for the false weight.<sup>19</sup>

It was at this meeting that the miners decided to organize themselves, to draw up a code of rules and regulations, and to start a strike fund from monies collected by subscription. A resolution was passed "that the miners of Vancouver Island do form themselves into a Mutual Protective Society, so that labour and capital will work harmoniously."<sup>20</sup>

The miners were again unsuccessful in forcing Dunsmuir to allow collective bargaining and settlement of grievances through negotiation, and the strike ended in June 1877 with several miners being fired and one evicted. The Miners Mutual Protective Association survived for several years, however, but attempts to organize all the collieries of the area did not bear fruit. In contrast with the anti-labour conditions in the Dunsmuir syndicate was the situation at the Nanaimo Colliery of the Vancouver Coal Company, under the manager S.M. Robins. Robins was able to maintain industrial peace for twenty years in this area, and his willingness to negotiate and work with the men did not endear him to Dunsmuir.

Just as the construction of the great railway lines across the west had brought a boom in the development in the coal industry, and had been the main inducement in bringing British Columbia into Confederation in 1871

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<sup>19</sup> Nanaimo Free Press, February 28, 1877, p. 1, quoted in ibid., p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



so also it started a large increase in population and an expansion of union development. With the passage of the Trades Union Act in 1872 by the MacDonald government in Ottawa, a more favourable atmosphere for unionism was created. By 1880 the Knights of Labour, originating in Philadelphia, started to organize workers in eastern Canada and soon appeared in the West at Nanaimo in December of 1883 as Local Assembly 3017. Membership started with only seventeen men, but by July of 1884 it had increased to 214 and the union had its own hall.<sup>21</sup> Other locals were established at Victoria in the same month and by October, Local Assembly 3429, Wellington Coal Miners, was organized.

Many of the locals or "assemblies" were mixed to include railroad employees and stevedores. By 1887, six assemblies of the Knights of Labour gathered in New Westminster and formed District Assembly 203, one of eight such districts in Canada at the end of the year. Membership was about 300 members but rose to a high in April of the next year to 459.<sup>22</sup> The Knights met some success in arousing interest among the miners and other labour groups on such issues as land grants, oriental labour and the monopolistic power of the Dunsmuir empire and its influence with the provincial government, which many labourers felt to be one and the same thing.

As the economy in the west started to develop and expand, new forms of unionism began to appear. In 1886 the American Federation of Labour was organized and its Canadian counterpart was the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress. In the United States, the Knights of Labour lost ground

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas Ross Kennedy, The Knights of Labour in Canada, (London, University of Western Ontario, 1956), p. 173.



mainly because of internal divisions, and conflict arose between the American Federation and the remnants of the Knights. In Canada, on the other hand, the new Labour Congress and the Knights worked in harmony and began to organize craft unions, which soon took center stage from the amorphous type locals of the Knights.

In Nanaimo the miners decided to organize themselves independently. A dangerous explosion had occurred in February, 1888, and a committee of twenty-one was established to inspect the mines of the area. The explosion induced the miners to meet with the Knights to discuss forming a local, but for some reason, the organization would not accept all of the men. The result was that on February 4, 1890, over 1000 men gathered to establish the Miners' and Mine Labourer's Protective Association and elected as its first president, Tully Boyce.<sup>23</sup>

This association immediately decided to strike against Dunsmuir at Extension on the issue of the eight hour day, but like the many efforts made previously, the strike failed. Robert Dunsmuir had died the previous year, but his son, James, was as intransigent towards labour issues as his father. Despite the setback, however, the Miners' Association continued to grow, and that same year sent Thomas Salmon as a delegate to the Trades and Labour Congress held in Ottawa. That fall, several craft unions and other labour organizations formed the Provincial Federated Labour Congress with Tully Boyce, head of the Miners' Association, elected as president of the new organization.

At the same time, a new miners' group in the United States was formed called the Western Federation of Miners, headed by William Dudley

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<sup>23</sup> LG, Vol. 2, No. 6, December 1902, p. 376.





("Big Bill") Haywood. The Federation was far more radical than most of its contemporaries, and was prone to advocating the use of force to meet force. This type of militancy was not long in coming to Canada, since the migration of labourers was considerably enhanced by the absence of any controls over the international boundary. The Western Federation established the first local in Canada at Rossland on July 16, 1895, when Miners' Union No. 38, WFM, was organized. Henry Heidman was chosen president of the local.<sup>24</sup> The Federation was slow in developing other unions, however, and it was not until 1899 that significant gains were made.

A major impetus for labour progress was the election of 1898 in British Columbia where several strongly pro-labour personalities were successful candidates. One man was Ralph Smith, who had been elected President of the Trades and Labour Congress in 1898, and who was business agent of the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association. By 1899 locals were established in several metal mining regions, mainly on the strength of fighting for the maintenance of the previous ten hours pay for the new eight hour day. A strike broke out over the issue, and despite the use of strikebreakers, the miners won. By this time, locals were established at Lethbridge (on August 22, 1899) and at Fernie, in April. Thomas Goddard was the first president.<sup>25</sup>

On December 17, 1899, the thirteen newly established locals of the Federation organized District 6, Western Federation of Miners at their meeting in Rossland, sight of the first local to be organized. A unique feature of the meeting was a plan to organize a series of lectures and to build a library to educate the membership and to gather statistics on un-

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; see also Philips, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



employment, wages, and working conditions.<sup>26</sup>

By July of 1901, the Federation claimed eighteen locals in the District, and two Canadians served in executive capacity: James Wilks of Nelson as vice-president, and James O. Baker of Slocan City as executive Board member. Organizational work continued for the next two years until the WFM decided to surrender jurisdiction in the coal mines to the United Mine Workers, principally because the locals felt the Federation was unable to carry out effective strike action.

New locals established in the Crow's Nest Pass field were Gladstone Miners' Union No. 76 at Coal Creek; Miners' Union No. 166 at Michel, organized on April 20, 1902; Miners' Union No. 120, at Morrissey, organized on July 27, 1902; and Frank Local 152 at Frank, Alberta. On Vancouver Island, there were new locals at Nanaimo (Nanaimo local 177), Ladysmith (Enterprise local 181), and Cumberland (Cumberland local 156).<sup>27</sup>

From mid-June of 1902 to August 1903, the Western Federation of Miners was responsible for the calling of six strikes in the western coal fields--three in the Crow's Nest Pass and three on Vancouver Island. The strikes of February, March, and May of 1903 saw unusually heavy labour unrest and became the subject of a special investigation by a Royal Commission.

The first of these six strikes occurred at Coal Creek in the Crow's Nest Pass. The superintendent at the mine wanted the men to work nine hours from pit head to pit head, while the miners argued that eight hours was the normal work period. As a result of the disagreement, 200 men walked out on the issue on June 26, 1902. A new regulation was offered

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<sup>26</sup> Philips, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> LG, Vol. 3, No. 3, March 1903, p. 675.



giving one-half hour for lunch and adding one-half hour to the work period. The company also granted some concessions on the place of registering arrival and departure from work. The miners agreed to the settlement and on September 4, 1902, the strike was called off.<sup>28</sup>

A second strike was called on November 3, 1902, this time at Michel over the discharge of the Michel local president, who was accused of interference with the working of the mine. The men initially demanded his reinstatement but later demanded the abolition of contract work and the provision of a hall for union meetings. Some 160 men were involved in the walkout, but on November 19, the strike was settled with the men returning to work under the original conditions.<sup>29</sup>

The third strike was the first of a series on Vancouver Island, and began on February 16, 1903. The Western Fuel Company had withdrawn an allowance of twenty-five cents per shift per man to all miners using the Clanny Safety lamp. The company did not think the bonus was necessary because of the introduction of a new safety lamp which was free from some of the defects of the Clanny lamp. The men also protested the throwing out of work of 150 men in a section of the mine where coal had been exhausted. The men wanted a 20 percent wage increase for all men working underground, which was refused by the company. On February 16, the company finally agreed to restore the allowance for the lamps, offered to increase the wages on tonnage, and allowed the retired men to work at a new seam.<sup>30</sup>

The next three strikes became known as the Coal strikes of 1903 and were unprecedented in the length and size of the walkouts. Over 5000 men

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<sup>28</sup> LG, Vol. 3, No. 2, August 1902, pp. 112 and 187.

<sup>29</sup> LG, Vol. 3, No. 6, December 1902, p. 477.

<sup>30</sup> LG, Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1903, p. 707





had walked out of the mines, and the economy of the entire district was brought to a virtual standstill due to the lack of coal. Both the provincial and federal governments attempted to settle the strikes through third party mediation, and a federal royal commission appointed on April 18 investigated and reported on the disputes.<sup>31</sup>

The Crow's Nest Pass Strike, February 11-March 31, 1903.<sup>32</sup>

The first of the three coal strikes of 1903 took place at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company's collieries at Coal Creek, Michel and Morrissey. As has been pointed out, the Western Federation of Miners had organized chartered locals in these areas, and in November of 1902, the miners decided to form a district organization of the Federation, to be composed of representatives from each of the local unions of the CPR Company's employees. The miners' intention in forming this association was to have all matters of general concern to the company's employees dealt with by the District Association. On November 25, 1902, the head office of the Federation in Denver approved the charter and the miners established the Crow's Nest Valley District Union No. 7, WFM, comprising nine delegates, three from each local.

In the next few months a scale of wages and regulations governing working conditions was drawn up by the union. On February 5, 1903, the District Secretary, John T. Davis requested a meeting with Mr. Thomas

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<sup>31</sup> For details leading up to the appointment of the Commission, see "Appointment of Royal Commission to Investigate Industrial Disputes in British Columbia," LG, Vol. 3, No. 11, May 1903, pp. 886-887. See also LG Vol. 3, No. 12, June 1903, p. 973, and LG Vol. 4, No. 1, July 1902, p. 77 for the progress of the Commission's findings.

<sup>32</sup> This account was taken from "Strike of Employees of Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co., Fernie, B.C.," LG, Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1903, pp. 673-679. See also Report of the Royal Commission on the Industrial Disputes in the Province of British Columbia, Chapter III, pp. 35-38.





Stockett, General Superintendent of the company. Davis stated that the miners wanted the interview with management to present their case on wages and working conditions. The letter was not acknowledged, and on the same day, Davis and another miner went to see Stockett personally to ask for the interview. The manager stated that the company would deal with its own employees but would not meet with the union. The miners sent a second note to Stockett the following day, Friday, and asked for an interview no later than three o'clock on Saturday afternoon. Again they received no acknowledgement and the Union Executive notified the executive committees of the local unions that the company had refused their request. The union called for a strike vote on Sunday, and while the vote taken was small, only two members voted against a strike call. The locals communicated the results of the vote to the District Executive on Monday, February 9, and it put out strike notices on Tuesday. The following day, all of the miners in the company's employ quit work.<sup>33</sup>

It was obvious to all concerned that the real issue in the strike was that of union recognition, even though the company stated it was prepared at all times to meet with a committee of employees from any one mine to discuss the grievances. Shortly after the strike began, offers for third party mediation were made. First, the Fernie Board of Trade, recognizing how far reaching to other industries dependent on the Crow's Nest Pass Company for fuel a prolonged strike could be, offered its services for a joint conference. The Premier of the province also extended his good offices, but by that time, the parties involved had applied to the Department of Labour in Ottawa to mediate under the Conciliation Act of 1900. As a result, the outside parties took no further steps for mediation.

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<sup>33</sup> LG, op. cit., p. 675.



On February 17, the Minister of Labour, Sir William Mulock, dispatched his deputy, W.L. MacKenzie King, to go to the area and attempt a settlement. King arrived on February 24, and immediately met representatives from both parties to learn their respective positions. The District Union presented a list of their grievances and Mr. Stockett gave a sworn statement of the average earnings of the miners at the three collieries, which was subsequently published in the local paper.<sup>34</sup>

The following week, on March 1, at its first annual convention held in Victoria, the British Columbia Mining Association appointed a committee composed of three representatives each from capital and labour, with the President of the Association as chairman, to act as a conciliation board in bringing about a settlement. The strikers and the company agreed to the committee's plan, and the Provincial Government offered to pay the committee's expenses. The first meeting was held on Monday, March 9, and by March 21, the committee arrived at a basis of settlement which it thought would be acceptable to both parties so that an immediate termination of the strike was anticipated. When the agreement, drawn up between management of the company and district union officials, was submitted to the miners for ratification, it was accepted by the Michel local but rejected by the locals at Coal Creek and Morrissey.<sup>35</sup> The Committee continued its work, however, and on March 28, the miners voted again at the three collieries. At Michel the vote was again in favour, 139 for, and 15 against.

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<sup>34</sup> LG, op. cit., p. 676. For the written communication between the union officials and the company to Mr. King, see "Report of the Deputy Minister," ibid., pp. 678-679.

<sup>35</sup> "Strike of Employees of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company," LG, Vol. 3, No. 10, April 1903, p. 800.



Morrissey miners voted 62 for and 28 against. At Coal Creek, however, the miners turned down the agreement by a vote of 136 to 34. Despite the adverse vote at Coal Creek, the District officials and management signed the agreement after ratification by the miners on the overall result, and the Federation called off the strike. The miners at Coal Creek, who two weeks before had caused considerable disturbances at the mine by threatening the caretakers of the pumps, reluctantly went along with the majority and returned to work with the miners at Michel and Morrissey on March 29. The major features of the agreement included the following:

- 1) The Company agreed to recognize the District Union.
- 2) The Company agreed to an increase in wages in some classes of work in the Morrissey and Michel camps, and the Union agreed to a slight reduction in the rates at Coal Creek.
- 3) There was a definite agreement governing certain conditions of employment, which had been in dispute.
- 4) The agreement was to run for a three year period from April 1, 1903, provided that after the expiration of two years, either party could terminate the agreement on sixty days' notice in writing by either party.<sup>36</sup>

The Vancouver Island Strikes: March 12 to August 21, 1903<sup>37</sup>

The second and third of the three coal strikes of 1903 were both

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<sup>36</sup> For the exact details of this settlement and the contract terms at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, see LG, Vol. 3, No. 10, April 1903, pp. 799-802.

<sup>37</sup> This account of the issues leading up to the strike and the role of the Federation is taken from "Strike at Extension Mines, British Columbia," LG, Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1903, p. 808; "Sittings of the Royal Labour Commission," Ibid., pp. 973-974.





under the auspices of the Western Federation of Miners, and the results of the strikes and the activities during the walkout were significant in the future relations of the binational to the locals. The Vancouver Island strikes started while the strike in District 7 of the Crow's Nest Pass was still in progress.

On March 8, 1903, two local miners at Extension, James Pritchard and Samuel Mottishaw, called a meeting of the miners at the camp to demand a 15 percent wage increase. Feeling it was necessary to organize a union, the miners vetoed the idea of seeking a wage increase, and instead, the 400 miners present voted to affiliate with the Western Federation of Miners. However, on Tuesday, March 10, the men received a notice from the company declaring that the mine would close on April 1, and ordering the men to return their tools to the company store by that date. The following day, Pritchard, Mottishaw, and five other miners prominent in the proceedings on Sunday, were discharged. Believing that the company took this action solely because they were forming a union, the miners refused to work any longer for the company and 800 miners stopped work.<sup>38</sup>

The miners did attempt to arrange a meeting with the president of the company, James Dunsmuir, but he refused to see them. On Sunday, March 22, James Baker, the chief Canadian organizer for the Western Federation of Miners arrived in the area to organize the miners at Extension as Enterprise Union, local 181. Baker had been working in the interior when the strike started at the Crow's Nest Pass.

At Union, the miners established a local of the Federation on April 5, Cumberland Union No. 156, but shortly after, the executive officials were dropped from the company's employ by not giving them new areas to

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<sup>38</sup> LG, ibid., p. 808.



work after their old places had been worked out. By the end of the month, only two of the nine local officials were still working. On May 1, a special committee of the miners met with the manager and asked for the reinstatement of the unemployed officials. This request was not granted and on the following day, the miners took a strike vote which carried 208 to 12. The membership stopped working on May 2.<sup>39</sup>

By this time the strikes at the Crow's Nest Pass collieries had been settled, but the new walkouts at Extension and Union caused serious hardships to other industries dependent on coal. The fact that the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees were striking against the CPR since their walkout on February 27 combined to bring the economy of the province almost to a standstill. The federal government therefore established a royal commission to inquire into the nature of the labour disputes in the province and to report into their causes. The report of this commission soon showed that there existed an underlying motive behind the several strikes which pointed to nothing less than a complete conspiracy among certain labour organizers to assist the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees (UBRE) in the dispute with the CPR.<sup>40</sup>

According to the introductory chapter of the commission's report, the commission started taking evidence from May 4 to June 14 inclusive, and held sittings at Victoria, Vancouver, Nanaimo, and the Wellington Collieries at Extension, Ladysmith, and Cumberland. Initially it planned to investigate the strikes at the Crow's Nest Pass, which concluded on

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<sup>39</sup> LG, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1903, p. 266.

<sup>40</sup> Members of the Commission were the Hon Gordon Hunter, Chief Justice of British Columbia, after whom the Commission is often referred to; and Rev. Elliot S. Rowe, of Victoria. The Secretary of the Commission was the Deputy Minister of Labour, W.L. MacKenzie King.



March 31, as well as those on Vancouver Island and the strike of the railway employees against the CPR. However, with the settlement of the coal strike at the Crow's Nest Pass, the Commission confined its findings to the Vancouver Island strikes and the railway strike.

In discussing the coal strikes in Chapter 4, the Commissioners came to the conclusion that the strikes at Ladysmith and Extension were brought about by an intrigue on the part of the Western Federation of Miners to assist the UBRE strikers against the CPR by tying up the Dunsmuir mines which were supplying coal to the railway. The argument of the commission was based on a series of telegrams produced at the Nanaimo hearing by Mr. King which show the request made by George Estes, president of the UBRE, to Clarence Smith, Secretary of the American Labour Union,<sup>41</sup> to which the Federation was affiliated. Estes asked the Federation to stop any coal from leaving the mining areas in order to prevent the Canadian Pacific Railway from getting coal. The following day, March 5, William Hayward wired Estes from Denver: "Have complied with your request. Notified Union at Nanaimo."<sup>42</sup> It will be recalled that on March 8, Samuel Mottishaw and James Pritchard had called a meeting at Extension to organize a union. This meeting, the Commission alleged, was also part of the intrigue in which the Federation played such a prominent part. It claimed the Union officials were guilty of gross deception in dealing with the local unions,

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<sup>41</sup> The American Labour Union was formed in Salt Lake City, Utah in May, 1895. It was a delegate body and held annual conventions to which affiliate bodies sent representatives. Both the UBRE and the WFM, as bi-nationals issuing charters to local unions, were affiliated with the ALU--hence the claim by the Commission of a conspiracy existing in the two strikes.

<sup>42</sup> The telegrams produced by King between Estes and the ALU, and between the Federation and the Vancouver locals of the WFM, are reprinted in Report, op. cit., pp. 38-39.





which should have possessed their utmost confidence. Said the Commission:

As in the case of Ladysmith, an explanation of the causes of the strike is to be found rather in the differences existing elsewhere at the time than any real feelings of dissatisfaction in regard to the conditions of their employment...It was the result of a carefully contrived and skillfully executed intrigue on the part of, or in connection with, the Executive of the Western Federation of Miners at Denver, and which, but for the action of this Executive and its members, would not have taken place.<sup>43</sup>

The strike at Extension was settled on July 3, 1903, at considerable disadvantage to the union men. Rates on many classifications of jobs were reduced and the price of house coal rose to \$1.50 per ton from 50 cents. The company agreed that union men would not be the subject of discrimination, but the men agreed to sign two year contracts promising not to strike.<sup>44</sup> In all, the strikers had suffered the loss of \$350,000 in wages and had received no assistance from the Federation which they were led to expect would be extended.

On August 4, the company submitted a proposal for agreement to a meeting held by the miners, but this was rejected outright. Negotiations continued, however, and on August 20, the original terms were finally accepted. The company did not recognize the District Union, and each miner had to sign a personal contract for two years agreeing not to strike. The wage scale and working conditions were not changed.<sup>45</sup>

The results of the three coal strikes left little room for satisfaction among the miners either for their own immediate interests or for the record with the Western Federation of Miners. In part dissatisfaction resulted from the lack of financial support during the strike which the miners felt would be forthcoming, and moreover, there was the feeling among

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>44</sup> LG, Vol. 4, No. 2, August 1903, p. 129.

<sup>45</sup> LG, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1903, pp. 266-267.





the miners that the leaders used the locals to further the particular aims of the Federation at the expense of the locals. Testimony taken by the Commission clearly indicated the growing suspicion that the Federation could not protect the interests of the local coal miners, and one man, Thomas Shenton, Secretary at Nanaimo, explicitly stated that the men would withdraw from the Binational because of the lack of financial support given during the strike.<sup>46</sup>

The Hunter Commission presented its report to the Minister of Labour, Sir William Mulock, on July 8. The report itself was a remarkable document in throwing light on the Canadian trade union movement, although it has been widely criticized for its excessive anti-labour stand, especially on the conspiracy issue, "a trial of motives," as the Chairman put it. The Commission proposed that all trade unions be incorporated, and that the Federal Government be empowered to stop strikes and refer contentious issues for decision in the courts. The Commission recommended that employers should not be allowed to discriminate against union workers, but there is little evidence shown in the report of the blacklisting, discrimination, and poor working conditions that had characterized the companies involved for so long.

In its conclusion, the report deals with the subject of binational trade unionism:<sup>47</sup>

In connection with the question of how far there should be legislation directed against foreign interference with Canadian workmen, it is pointed out that the evidence presented two classes of interference, one that of procuring and inciting to quit work by the foreign agitator in person, and the other, the case of officials

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<sup>46</sup> Testimony of Thomas Shenton, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in the Province of British Columbia, op. cit., pp. 510-512.

<sup>47</sup> Report, op. cit., p. 136.



of international and other organizations who remain in a foreign country but who procure and incite by means of other officials in Canada, and who assume the control and direction of Canadian workmen until the termination of the dispute. The Commissioners state that they think it is necessary for parliament to interfere in the direction of making it an offense for any person not a British subject, who has not been in resident in the province for at least a year, to procure or incite any employee in Canada to quit employment without the consent of the employer...

In these days, when the human energies are strained by the utmost amid whirling dust and machinery, long hours are a crime against nature. The machine should be the servant of man and not man the slave of the machine...If it could be brought to pass that the workmen would have to work only long enough as to make his work pleasurable exercise, instead of an exhausting toil, and at the same time secure a comfortable living, society will have advanced a long way towards the millenium.

By late fall, 1903, several of the locals of the Federation abandoned the Western Federation and began looking for other affiliations. The failure of the Federation to maintain the allegiance of the remaining locals prompted the United Mine Workers of America to begin organizing the miners into the jurisdiction of binational unionism.



### Chapter III

#### EARLY ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS IN WESTERN CANADA

The first efforts to organize the coal fields of Western Canada under the auspices of the United Mine Workers were part of a wider plan on the part of the Binational to extend its jurisdiction in northwestern United States. In April of 1903, when the labour troubles in British Columbia were reaching their peak, Thomas L. Lewis, Vice-President of the International, stated that one purpose of a forthcoming executive board meeting was to complete plans "to invade the West and Northwest, and affiliate with the miners' organizations already in existence in that section of North America."<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the Binational in wanting to move into the West were basically threefold. First, there was the same basic motive in organizing the coal fields of the United States--preventing coal from non-union mines from competing at an advantage over coal from union mines. The coal fields of British Columbia and Alberta were large exporters of coal which competed with mines in Washington and other western states. Secondly, with the Western Federation of Miners held in low esteem by the district locals, the time was ripe for the United Mine Workers to establish industrial unionism as opposed to the radical socialist philosophy adhered to by the Federation. This policy became evident when the UMW began advancing more business-like policies which directly challenged the low wages and working conditions in the mines, and paid less attention to political considerations. Thirdly, the International could hardly resist the initiative taken by the Canadian locals to join the Association.

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<sup>1</sup> "Will Invade Canada," United Mine Workers Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1, April 1903, p. 2. Hereinafter referred to as UMWJ.





The man chosen by the Binational Executive to begin the organization work in Canada was Harry Bousfield, who had also done similar work in Montana, North Dakota, Idaho and Washington. One report described his mission in Canada.

Harry Bousfield returned yesterday morning from Indianapolis where he has been attending the meeting of the international board for the UMWA, of which he is a member... Tonight, Mr. Bousfield will leave on one of the most important missions that the national board could well intrust him with and one of the most daring missions as well, an assignment to go to the miners of the Northwest and British America, in Canada, to organize them. There is probably no more difficult part of North America for work of this nature than the district which has been assigned to Mr. Bousfield. It is not only difficult on account of being entirely new territory, but it is also so far away that the organizer who goes there--there never having been any effort in the past on the part of the UMWA to organize the miners of that territory--practically isolates himself from his wife and family for many months.<sup>2</sup>

Bousfield arrived in the Fernie Area of the Crow's Nest Pass mines in late April, and on May 5, the formal ceremonies were held inducting the local at Coal Creek into the United Mine Workers. The former Federation local became Gladstone Miners' Union, Local 2314. The press committee of the newly formed local gave their reasons for joining the UMW:

We have of late years been connected with the Western Federation of Miners but due to lack of confidence which has prevailed since our last strike, we decided to turn the latter down and enroll under the banner of the United Mine Workers. One of the most particular reasons for our action is that the Western Federation of Miners is not quite suitable to our craft or calling, because when we stop work, it throws nearly the whole of the West Kootenay idle, both miners and smeltermen, and various other workmen; consequently we can expect no assistance from them on this account...

In regard to the recognition of the Union, we regard it as a tool of the managers' craftiness applied to gain some other points, namely the good will of the head officials of the W.F.M.<sup>3</sup>

Bousfield reported back to the Binational Executive in July on his

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<sup>2</sup> "He Will Go to Canada," UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 1903, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 7, May 21, 1903, p. 5.



three months experience in British Columbia. He stated that there were 1500 miners in the UMW locals, enough to give the area several delegates to the national convention. While there was some rivalry between the UMWA and the Western Federation, Bousfield left no doubt that the real battle existed south of the Canadian border:<sup>4</sup>

The fight for union membership in British Columbia at this time is virtually identical to that in the northwest districts. The skirmish here is between the UMWA and the WFM, but the campaign primarily is between the organizations allied with the American Federation of Labour and the American Labour Union. The latter is a socialist movement, and the WFM is a movement founded upon the basic principles of socialism and is opposed to the making of annual contracts between the employer and the employee.

The first strike under UMWA auspices was held in September 1903 when the Coal Creek local struck at the mines of the Crow's Nest Pass Company. The Dunsmuir interests planned to hold out, but after a work stoppage of one month, the Binational secured its first contact with a Canadian operator. The company granted the miners' union conditions in the agreement, which was to run for one year.<sup>5</sup>

Bousfield continued his organizational work among the locals on his return to the area on October 26, and in the following month, established new locals at Fernie (Local 2314), Michel (Local 2334), and Tonkin (Local 2318). By November 9, Bousfield succeeded in completing the organization of the district union, and a full set of officials was elected. The first District officers were Frank H. Sherman, President; John N. Howbrook, Secretary-Treasurer; Peter Patterson, Vice-President; and R.G. Duggan, X. Harmer, H. Wilson, D. McClement, F.W. Mason, and A. Tyas, members of the Executive Board. Total membership of the new district was 3293.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 14, July 9, 1903, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 27, October 15, 1903, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> "Another New District," UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 32, November 19, 1903, p. 5.



Bousfield moved his efforts to Alberta, and by February, 1904, he secured the formation of three more locals. The miners at Frank decided to leave the Federation and joined the UMWA as Local 1263. Other locals were established at Lille (Local 1233) and Bellevue (Local 431). In April the miners at Coleman affiliated as Local 2633. When the Tonkin local disbanded in May, 1904, the miners at Carbonada assumed the same number and joined the UMW as Local 2318. This brought the total number of locals in District 18 to seven with a combined paid-up membership of 1077.<sup>7</sup> The following year, the District added locals at Bankhead (Local 29) and Canmore (Local 1387), and paid-up membership increased to 2269.

First Contract Negotiations: The Strikes of 1905. Notwithstanding their success at organizing new locals in the District, the miners were faced with a slow economy in 1905, and as many as 500 miners were unemployed. The principal market was still the railway companies, and the intense competition induced several coal operators into lowering their prices in order to obtain new sales orders, with the result that some collieries were actually operating at a loss. The biggest problem for the miners, however, was to cope with the large foreign speaking element in the district who did not belong to the union. The District officials appealed to the Binational to send organizers of Slavonian and Italian descent to assist in adding these immigrants to the union ranks.<sup>8</sup> During this organizational period, several UMWA locals attempted to renew contracts or make new agreements through union negotiations and several strikes resulted.

The first strike in 1905 took place at Coleman where 200 miners

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Report from District 18," UMWJ, Vol. 15, No. 30, November 24, 1904, p.4.





decided to walk out on January 2 after the International Coal and Coke Company replaced union miners with non-union men and refused to sign a union schedule of wages. District President F.H. Sherman offered arbitration, but the superintendent, E.E. Reynolds, refused to deal with the UMWA.<sup>9</sup> The strike lasted two months, but the employees were able to secure a contract to run for two years dating from March 1. According to the terms of the agreement, the company offered to pay the men by contract instead of the day work system employed previously, and the men received an increase in earnings.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the company consented to deduct fees as requested by the union from the miners' pay cheques (check-off), and the union was to build its own hospital and pay their own doctor.<sup>11</sup>

A second strike occurred on Vancouver Island at Nanaimo where the UMWA organizers were attempting to bring this coal field under the Bi-national's jurisdiction. The miners were locked out on June 1, because they would not submit to the company's demands to a 10 percent reduction in wages. The British Columbia legislature had passed a new 8 hour work law as an amendment to the Coal Miners Regulation Act,<sup>12</sup> prohibiting the employment of underground miners for more than eight hours out of twenty-four. The employer involved, the Western Fuel Company, wanted remuneration from the miners for the amount of time it would lose in complying with the new legislation. The Company claimed that it was at a special disadvantage, since its shaft in Number One Mine was vertical, and it

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<sup>9</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 15, No. 37, January 12, 1905, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> LG, Vol. 5, No. 11, May 1905, p. 1223.

<sup>11</sup> "Report from District 18," UMWJ, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> For the terms of this act, see LG, Vol. 5, No. 11, May 1905, p. 1234.





took the men that much longer to reach their work.<sup>13</sup>

The miners had held a mass meeting on May 27, and declined an offer from the company either to continue to employ them at reduced wages corresponding to the reduction in working hours, or to let them use a shaft on Protection Island located nearer their work, with the men paying ten cents a day to get across the water.<sup>14</sup>

During June, the company offered to reduce the cost of the ferry to the miners, but the miners refused to pay anything. Instead, they claimed they were willing to return to work immediately, pending a decision arrived at through arbitration. With the strike underway for six weeks, and the industries surrounding Nanaimo seriously depressed, the acting Minister of Labour, the Hon. H.R. Emerson, offered the services of the Department of Labour in accordance with the Conciliation Act of 1900. He wired the following telegram to the parties in dispute:<sup>15</sup>

Government greatly regrets to learn of serious situation at mines of Western Fuel Company. Will be pleased to send Mr. MacKenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Nanaimo to lend friendly offices of the Department of Labour, with a view to effecting a settlement of existing difficulties under Conciliation Act, if intervention under Act acceptable to parties.

The Union consented to the arbitration offer, but the Company wired the Minister stating that "the only question at issue...is the recognition of the United Mine Workers of America. To this the coal company has repeatedly stated it is not disposed to accede. The coal company...feels that the question of recognition of a union is not a question to be arbitrated, and that nothing will result from intervention."<sup>16</sup>

Finally, however, the Company did agree to mediation and the Deputy

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<sup>13</sup> "Strike at Nanaimo," UMWJ, Vol. 16, No. 18, September 7, 1905, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> LG, Vol. 6, No. 1, July 1905, p. 94.

<sup>15</sup> LG, Vol. 6, No. 2, August 1905, p. 203.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



Minister arrived in Nanaimo in September, and an agreement was reached on September 30. According to the terms of settlement, the miners agreed to enter the mine by the Protection Island shaft, but had to pay not more than one dollar a month each for transportation by ferry. In return, the company agreed to assume the entire cost of transportation and to restore the old hours of labour as soon as the eight hour law was repealed. In addition, the company was to establish a system of penalties in lieu of suspension in the case of dockage inspection, and to make reductions in the prices charged for tools.<sup>17</sup> The company did not agree to recognize the union, however, since the negotiations were undertaken on the basis of an employee's committee rather than a committee of the union. This method of settlement brought company unionism to the area, and for many years retarded the growth and development of industrial unionism as sought by the United Mine Workers.<sup>18</sup>

In the same month that the strike at Nanaimo was settled, a dispute broke out at Frank, Alberta, over the expiration of the contract between the Canadian American Coal and Coke Company involving over 200 men. The year old agreement had run out on September 1, and the company wanted to modify the terms of the contract. The employers based their dissatisfaction on the following two points:

1) The company collected all union dues without the written order of the employee.

2) The company did not have proper control over the men for hiring and discharging them.

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<sup>17</sup> LG, Vol. 6, No. 7, January 1906, p. 767.

<sup>18</sup> Philips, No Power Greater, p. 42.



The union refused to grant any concessions on the old contract form and on September 6, the men walked out. Negotiations continued, however, and a settlement was reached on September 29. The company consented to continue the check-off from the monies due each employee, in return for a clause that the company be allowed to hire and discharge the men with a provision that no man would be discriminated against for either being a union or non-union employee.<sup>19</sup> Payroll among the coal camps at Fernie amounted to \$85,000 at this time.

The Crow's Nest Pass Company operated from June 1, 1903 to May 31, 1905 under the contract agreement made during the 1903 Royal Commission hearings in British Columbia with the Western Federation of Miners, District 7. When the United Mine Workers established locals at the collieries operated by the company, the Binational lived up to the old agreement made by the Federation. The only exception was a strike at Coal Creek in September 1903.<sup>20</sup> A two year agreement was negotiated between the employees as represented by District 18 and the Crow's Nest Pass Company covering wages and working agreements at Coal Creek, Michel, and Carbonada.<sup>21</sup> During the summer, however, a disagreement arose over the interpretation of Article 13 in the contract, covering the movement of the McGinty and the Jig. The miners claimed they were to be paid three dollars for each movement; the company stated \$1.50 was the correct rate. On August 19, the men quit work to consider strike action, but two days later, a committee of the employees met with the superintendent and an agreement was reached.

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<sup>19</sup> "Strike of Coal Miners at Frank, Alberta," LG, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 1905, p. 461.

<sup>20</sup> See page 34, supra.

<sup>21</sup> For text of the disputed sections of the contract, see LG, Vol. 6, No. 2, August 1905, pp. 183-194. The fourth colliery of the company, Morrissey, was closed in 1904.





The men were to be paid three dollars, and all deductions of back pay were to be made up by the company.<sup>22</sup> Work was resumed on August 23.

The Lethbridge Strike, March 9 - December 2, 1906. By 1906, the District organization of the United Mine Workers was well established, although it had yet to gain a contract agreement recognizing the Union in all the locals. Membership totalled about twenty-three hundred, and the various locals had excellent leadership in Frank Sherman, an immigrant from Wales who had been associated with William Abraham, otherwise known as Mabon, who was President of the South Wales Federation of Mining.<sup>23</sup>

The year 1906 was important for the Union and significant for the development of collective bargaining procedures in labour disputes, and decisively influenced the future of third party intervention clauses in contracts and in the law throughout the country. Moreover, for the first time, miners that year voted financial support from the district to strikers in one local. This show of support from the entire district was a prelude to the attempt by the UMW to secure district-wide contracts.

The UMW had set up local 574 at Lethbridge in February 1906, mainly on the efforts of Binational Board member Peter Patterson. On his request the Manager of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company agreed not to discharge the men for joining the union. Mr. Naismith, the Manager, said he would consider a proposition from the men similar to what then existed at other companies in the district, and Patterson set out with J.B. Galvin, Vice-President of District 18, to formulate an acceptable arrangement in writing.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For the revised terms of the contract, see LG, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 1905, p. 274 and p. 338.

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 5, June 21, 1906, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> "The Lethbridge Strike," UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 12, August 9, 1906, p. 1.



On March 3, they presented to the Manager their proposal, and he promised an answer the following morning at ten o'clock. However, at this meeting, Naismith refused to accept Patterson and Galvin as true representatives of the employees. They decided therefore to assemble the miners together on March 6 as a show of support. With over 500 employees present, the meeting confirmed Patterson and Galvin as the miners' spokesmen, and Naismith finally agreed to receive them, although the following day, he refused to open negotiations with District President Frank Sherman. The Union presented the following demands on March 8:<sup>25</sup>

- 1) A grievance procedure by which hearings would be held by a committee of company officials and a Pit committee of the men;
- 2) A minimum wage rate of \$3 per shift for each miner;
- 3) An eight hour shift for workmen underground, and ten hours for outside labour;
- 4) Full recognition of the United Mine Workers at Lethbridge;
- 5) The company to allow check-off of union dues payable to union officers;
- 6) Delivery of screen coal to the workmen at \$2.50 per ton;
- 7) Wages of \$3.00 in wet places, \$3.50 in rock work, and \$4.00 for hoisting engineers.

The company refused to meet the union men again and the miners immediately went on strike. This was on March 9. The company succeeded in operating the mines using non-union labour. However, several clashes between the union men and the non-union help occurred, and after March 19, the mines required police protection to preserve order.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> LG, Vol. 6, No. 10, April 1906, pp. 1153-1154.

<sup>26</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 6, June 28, 1906, p. 5.



The strike continued throughout the summer despite the hardships felt throughout the district, and the company tried to maintain operations, claiming the strike ceased to affect its conditions. However, this claim was disputed by District President Frank Sherman, who said the company was unable to operate the mines except for a few cars in the mines which had been loaded before the strike began.<sup>27</sup>

On July 21, a committee of eight miners submitted a proposal to the company whereby an arbitration board composed of two members from the company and two members from the union would be established. The arbitrators would have full power to agree on working conditions and wages, and in case of disagreement, the whole matter would be referred to an independent chairman, whose decision would be final. On July 28, the Company replied to the proposal with a refusal to accept any form of arbitration, since "... never having had an opportunity of discussing with our employees any grievances they may have, we have nothing to arbitrate." However, the company offered not to discriminate against any former employees if they returned to work at the wages paid before the strike was called.<sup>28</sup> By November, the company was producing only 300 tons of coal from the mine, only about one-quarter the average output under normal conditions. Some 150 men were still employed as compared with 595 workers prior to the walk-out.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the strike, the men received financial aid from the union. In mid-July, the annual meeting of the Executive Board of the District Union held in Blairmore voted to continue the fight at Lethbridge, "...

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<sup>27</sup> "Conditions in Alberta," UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 6, June 28, 1906, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> LG, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 1906, pp. 297-298.

<sup>29</sup> LG, Vol. 7, No. 5, November, 1906, p. 557.





by every means at their command and until such time as the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company are prepared to meet and make a satisfactory agreement with the men..."<sup>30</sup>

However, with the coming of the cold weather in the late fall, and with a strike in progress at Fernie, the coal famine existing throughout the Western provinces became so severe that the Hon. Walter Scott, Premier of Saskatchewan called on the Department of Labour to intervene in the negotiations. His first request was by letter, but as the situation showed no prospect of settlement, he personally went to Ottawa to request intervention under the Conciliation Act.<sup>31</sup>

Both parties at Lethbridge consented to the mediation of the Department, and Mr. King arrived in the area on November 23. He communicated to both sides the letters from Mr. Scott, and asked if "...in the public interest and to save families from freezing in their homes, work at the Lethbridge mines cannot be resumed immediately, the parties agreeing to a modus operandi which will permit of the differences between them being amicably adjusted without prejudice to the interests of either..."<sup>32</sup>

On the same day, the Union replied to King's suggestion with an offer to negotiate with the company provided that the company would waive its objection to the employees belonging to the UMW, and in the event that the parties could not come to a settlement, the parties should submit the disputes to an arbitration board of two members from both sides.<sup>33</sup> This reply by the Union was almost identical to its original proposal for arbitration given to the company in July.

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<sup>30</sup>"Convention in District 18," UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 26, November 15 1906, p.5.

<sup>31</sup> LG, Vol. 7, No. 6, December 1906, p. 647.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 655.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 656. The details of the original arbitration bear curious resemblance to the new Industrial Disputes Investigation Act passed the following year. See below.





The company gave King an offer on November 25, in which it stated "...we are prepared to discuss an increase of wages with any person you see fit to call in as representing the men..." but made no mention of the arbitration condition given by the men.<sup>34</sup> The company agreed that a joint conference should be convened, but that questions other than wages would not be considered.

The same evening, Sunday, November 25, King explained the company's position to the workmen, and he was able to start negotiations by ten o'clock that same night. At the four hour session,

"...conducted in a friendly manner throughout, what appeared to be a basis of settlement was reached. The company made certain important concessions; the representatives of the men withdrew altogether certain of their demands. One or two points alone were left for further considerations..."<sup>35</sup>

The principal point which kept the parties apart at this first meeting was a clause insisted on by the company governing the security against discrimination between union men and non-union men on the part of either the company or any of the employees. The men refused to accept the original draft of the clause and threatened to break off negotiations if it was not changed. King endeavoured to get the company to modify its stand and to have the union overcome its objection to it. By Monday, each party conceded the principle involved, and King hoped to have an agreement on the basis of his own wording of the contentious clause.<sup>36</sup>

The Union men, however, realizing the responsibility they were assuming in holding out against a settlement except on terms which they themselves were prepared to accept, decided to refer their stand to Mr. John Mitchell, President of the UMW, and to abide by his decision. While

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 657.



the company reverted to its original position, District President Sherman and another delegate prepared to leave for Indianapolis. Immediately, Mr. King found himself in a dilemma. The trip to International headquarters would take a week or ten days, and there existed the possibility of a break in communications or a misunderstanding of any position taken. On the other hand, if he went to Indianapolis, as a government official, he could be criticized for interference. Yet, King felt he would be in a better position to assure the miners and the company as soon as a decision was made by the Binational President, and if the situation warranted it, he could discuss the dispute with Mitchell himself. Weighing both possibilities, King decided to join the Union delegation, and they departed shortly after midnight on Tuesday and arrived in Indianapolis on Saturday morning.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, the situation at home had worsened, however, for on the same day as their departure, there appeared in the press a public letter addressed to the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, which described the conditions existing in Bradworth, a small town in Saskatchewan. The writer, William L. Ramsay, noted that settlers were burning lumber valued at \$30.00 a thousand, that the local doctor claimed suffering and death would soon ensue from the scarcity of fuel, that all schools were closed, and that regardless of the rights involved in the coal dispute, the rights of the people were paramount. Therefore, he demanded personal intervention by the Prime Minister.<sup>38</sup>

In Indianapolis, King received the following telegram from the company in Lethbridge:<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 658.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 657.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 659.



Managing director still thinks our clause fair to all parties, but under circumstances existing in country, is willing to accept your substitute clause provided all other conditions are accepted.

Elated, King showed the telegram to the delegates and assured them in the name of the Canadian government that the company had accepted his clause. Given the authority to act, District President Sherman accepted the conditions and declared the strike at an end. The District Executive assembled the men on Sunday, and Sherman's decision was ratified. The company was notified that same night and the men returned to work Monday morning, although some workmen had to wait until the galleries in which they were to work were cleared. Shortly after, the company commenced work on double shifts.

The terms of the agreement were significant for the miners in light of the effort they had put into the strike:<sup>40</sup>

1) There was an increase of wages amounting to about ten percent for most of the employees of the company.

2) The company agreed to the appointment of a check-weighman whenever the men so desired to be paid from payroll deductions.

3) The company agreed to a check-off limited to rent, doctor and hospital fees, coal, powder, oil and other supplies from the company, and sick benefit funds and library services if desired.

4) Employees involved in the strike were to be given preference over strangers for future employment.

5) No discrimination would be shown towards union men, but all company employees would be on equality in the company's employment.

6) A grievance procedure was included by which disputes would first

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<sup>40</sup> For the exact terms of the settlement and the new wage schedule, see LG, Vol. 7, No. 6, December 1906, p. 660.





be handled by a pit boss and the superintendent, and failing settlement, they would be referred to the general manager of the company. Redress could be sought by arbitration, in which case the decision was to be final. The arbitrators would consist of a representative of the men and the company, but would not be either mine operators or miners. If this two man board could not agree, they were to seek a third arbitrator or to request the Chief Justice of Alberta to act. The decision of the majority was to be final and binding.

The miners withdrew their original demands for union recognition, observance of the eight hour day, and the check-off of union dues. Clearly, however, the most significant result of the strike and the terms of the settlement was the inclusion in the contract of the clause governing arbitration. Prior to this strike, participation by third party mediators had been arranged on an ad hoc basis. The coal strikes of 1903, for example, had seen offers for intervention from the Premier of British Columbia, the Fernie Board of Trade, the British Columbia Mining Association, and the Federal Department of Labour.

There is some doubt as to whom credit is due for the clause in the Lethbridge agreement. The Department of Labour files include an unsigned and undated draft of the 1906 agreement, and there is little doubt that King was sympathetic to some form of arbitration procedures. In his report to the Minister of Labour, he remarks as follows:<sup>41</sup>

When it is remembered that organized society alone makes possible the operation of mines to the mutual benefit of those engaged in this work of production, a recognition of the obligations due society by the parties is something which the state is justified in compelling if the parties themselves are unwilling to concede it. In any

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 661.



civilized community, private rights should cease when they become public wrongs. Clearly there is nothing in the rights of parties to a dispute to justify the inhabitants of a province being brought face to face with a fuel famine and winter conditions, so long as there is coal in the ground, and men and capital at hand to mine it. Either the disputants must be prepared to leave the differences which they are unable to settle amicably to the arbitration of such authority as the State may determine most expedient, or make way for others who are prepared to do so.

The principal piece of labour legislation governing labour disputes was the Conciliation and Labour Act of 1900 which empowered the Minister of Labour to inquire into the causes of any dispute and to arrange conferences between the parties. At the request of either labour or management, the Minister could appoint a board of arbitration, but no board was ever established in the coal industry prior to the Lethbridge strike. A subsequent result then of the Lethbridge coal strike was the passage of the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act of 1907.

Strike at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company. A second important strike which took place in 1906 in District 18 was the dispute at the Crow's Pass Coal Company at the Fernie and Michel collieries. The walk-out originally took place on September 22 and the immediate cause was a refusal by the union men of the UMW to work with non-union help.<sup>42</sup> When the agreement covering the workmen at the mine had been signed in May 1905, the Union agreed to the company's demand that each worker sign a personal contract for the personal observance of the agreement. For union men, the company would deduct any dues, fines, assessments and initiation fees from the payrolls. In July, however, the company had permitted several men to cancel their names to the check-off clause and still remain in its employ. Moreover, a cancellation notice was written into the

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<sup>42</sup> "Strike of Coal Miners at Fernie, B.C.," LG, Vol. 7, No. 6, December 1906, p. 684.



union books by a company clerk at the insistance of the company. The district officials protested, but when the company refused to change the order, the men shut down the mines on September 22.<sup>43</sup>

Both parties continued to negotiate an amicable settlement, and the district officers allowed the engineers, firemen, and pumpmen to work to provide maintenance service in the mine. A few days after the strike started, however, the company management ordered these workmen to take out the machinery, to pull up the pumps, and to stop the fans, thereby allowing the mines to fill up with water.

The District Secretary, Joseph Sharp, went to Indianapolis to refer to whole matter to President Mitchell, and after a meeting on October 21, he returned to Fernie with Mr. Thomas Burke, a representative of the International Executive, both men arriving at the end of the month. By this time, the strike was beginning to cause hardship throughout the district, and the acting Premier of the Province requested management to meet the union to effect a prompt settlement.<sup>44</sup>

Negotiations then began and on November 12, Burke issued a memorandum in which he reviewed the clauses of the 1905 agreement, especially those dealing with the issues of the closed shop and discrimination. He stated that, had Mitchell known of the promises made by the union at that time, he would not have recommended strike action in a telegram he sent on September 11 nor would he allow a strike on the closed shop issue.

That same day an agreement was made between G.G.S. Lindsay, acting for the company, and Burke, acting for the union. There was to be no

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<sup>43</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 26, November 15, 1906, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.





discrimination by union men against non-union personnel, nor a refusal to work with them. All men who joined the UMW since September 11, 1906 were to have their release, although they had the option of rejoining. The company was to turn over to the union the monies collected for the union in the September payroll, and a new check-off clause lasting for the life of the agreement was substituted for the contentious clause.<sup>45</sup>

On Burke's orders, most of the employees returned to work the following day, although some men refused to accept Burke's authority in acting for President Mitchell. However, when a telegram from Mitchell himself confirmed Burke's position and ordered the men to return to work, the strike ended.

#### Formation of Western Coal Operators' Association - December 1906

As the various locals in District 18 began to establish themselves and to act more and more as an organization, as in the Lethbridge strike, for example, the different operators in the Western coal fields began to look for methods to match this newly found labour strength. On December 15, 1906, several companies carrying out operations in southern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia, located along the routes of the Crow's Nest Pass railway and along part of the main line of the Canadian Pacific route, decided to form an Association to protect their own interests and to act on matters of mutual concern.<sup>46</sup> The operators had held an informal meeting in Spokane on October 17, 1906 and agreed to "form a Coal Mine

<sup>45</sup> LG, op. cit., p. 685.

<sup>46</sup> LG, Vol. 7, No. 12, June 1907, p. 1388. Article 2 of its constitution states the Association's objects: "To protect members in rights and privileges under the laws of Alberta, British Columbia, and Dominion of Canada as employers of labour and to safeguard and promote the interests of the coal industry; to promote stability of business and steady employment of labour, whether organized or unorganized by encouraging friendly relations and to discourage lockouts, strikes, and boycotts." For other details of the Association's Constitution, see Alberta Coal Commission Report, 1925, pp. 184-196.





Operators' Union, for the purpose of offensive and defensive protection of the coal interests of the Crow's Nest Pass and Alberta Coal Mines."<sup>47</sup>

The companies comprising the Association, with the exception of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company at Lethbridge and the Canada West Coal and Coke Company at Taber, which were not members, all furnished the major part of the domestic coal used in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and the coal supplied for transportation and industrial purposes in southern British Columbia. The railway companied were major purchasers of coal and dependent on it for fuel. These companies were also large exporters of bituminous coal to the United States and other countries. By April 1905, seven companies had joined the Association:

<u>Name of the Company</u>	<u>Locality</u>	<u>No. of men Employed*</u>
Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co., Ltd.	Coal Creek, Fernie, Michel, B.C.	1700
International Coal & Coke Co., Ltd.	Coleman, Alta.	375
Western Canadian Collieries, Ltd.	Lille & Bellevue, Alta.	350
Canadian-American Coal & Coke Co.Ltd.	Frank, Alta.	300
The Breckenridge & Lund Coal Co.Ltd.	Lundbreck, Alta.	125**
The H.W. McNeill Coal Co., Ltd.	Canmore, Alta.	300
The Pacific Coal Co. Ltd.	Bankhead, Alta.	<u>300</u>
TOTAL		3450

\* From figures supplied by the companies  
\*\* From figures supplied by the men--not given in company's statement.

In all of these camps, the mine workers had organized locals affiliated with District 18, UMWA. The companies had agreements with the miners of District 18, which expired on April 1, 1907.

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<sup>47</sup> Minutes, WCOA, October 17, 1906, Spokane, Washington. The WCOA was first named "The Coal Operators Organization of Eastern British Columbia and Alberta." The initiative in starting the Association was taken by Mr. G.G.S. Lindsey of Fernie, who became the first President.



The Association was organized according to the sub-districts of the UMW.<sup>48</sup> Provision was made for two or more sub-districts to combine into a local association without affecting representation in the central organization. Each sub-district was to have one vote for each 100,000 tons or fraction thereof produced, but the Association was to have exclusive power to deal with the making of general agreements with the representatives of labour organizations within the territory and to decide on working conditions and recognition of unions.

Early in February, President Frank Sherman invited the coal operators to meet with the officials of District 18 for the purpose of arriving at a joint agreement which would bring about a certain degree of uniformity into the wage schedule and working conditions at the various collieries. Accordingly, on March 4, 1907, the delegates of the Operators' Association and the United Mine Workers met in joint convention for the first time in history of the district.<sup>49</sup> Sherman acted as chairman until the convention elected its officials. Mr. G.G.S. Lindsay, President of the WCOA, was the unanimous choice of the delegates for chairman, and UMW District Secretary J.A. Carter was elected recording secretary.

Included among the twelve operators and twenty-three miners were Binational Vice-President Lewis, and International Board Member Thomas Burke of Illinois. Shortly after a dispute arose on the question of allowing delegates present from mines from which there were no operators present. Mr. T. Stockett of the Pacific Coast Coal Company felt that these

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<sup>48</sup> The organization of District 18 into sub-districts is detailed in Chapter I, supra.

<sup>49</sup> Fernie Ledger, as reported in "Convention of Miners and Operators in Session at Calgary, B.C.," (sic), UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 44, March 21, 1907, p. 3.



men should not be allowed to participate in the discussions, while Thomas Burke stated that the men should not be penalized simply because certain operators did not see fit to attend a convention vital to all camps, operators, and miners alike. Eventually a compromise was settled according to which the men were allowed to speak but not permitted to vote or act on the scales committee.<sup>50</sup>

At this first meeting, the miners submitted their proposals for consideration, but Mr. Lindsay claimed the operators had proposals of their own and asked for an adjournment to give the operators time to present their case. However, when the meeting reconvened the following morning, March 5, Lindsay read a brief statement to the effect that the miners' propositions could not be considered until the miners present proved they had the authority to negotiate a contract. District President Sherman presented the minutes of the last meeting in Fernie where the miners authorized the District Executive to negotiate with the WCOA, although any agreement reached had to be ratified by a referendum vote.<sup>51</sup>

The minutes did not convince the operators, however, and negotiations broke down, and the joint convention was adjourned until March 18. While these negotiations were underway in Calgary, an important labour measure was before the House of Commons in Ottawa. The new act, The Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act, received Royal Assent on March 23.<sup>52</sup> The

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Later a sub-committee of the convention recommended that on critical points, only four votes would be cast, Stockett and Lindsay for the operators, and Sherman and J.A. MacDonald for the miners. The meetings were held in closed sessions.

<sup>51</sup> "Vice-President Lewis' Report," UMW, Proceedings, 19th Convention, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 37, January 23, 1908, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> For the details leading up to the passage of this act after the Lethbridge strike and a resume of the machinery of the act, see "The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907--Outlines of Leading Provisions," LG, Vol. 7, No. 10, April 1907, pp.1108-1113. Although the act was widely known as the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act, its real title was "An Act to Aid in the Prevention and Settlement of Strikes and Lockouts in Coal Mines and Industries Connected with Public Utilities." For the exact text of the Act, see Ibid., pp. 1147-1161.





existence of this measure was known to the parties at the Calgary negotiations, and although the exact provisions of the Act were not familiar to the leaders of either party, it was understood that if they could not arrive at a settlement, there would be no strike until a Board was appointed under the Act, and the differences studied. Had this law not been passed before the April 1 deadline, the union leaders were prepared to go on strike in the event of a failure to reach a contract settlement.<sup>53</sup>

On April 9, the Department of Labour received an application from the employees of the Crow's Nest Pass Company for the appointment of a Board of Conciliation and Investigation to inquire into their dispute with the company. The application, signed by Frank Sherman, District President and John A. MacDonald, District Secretary, stated the nature of the dispute as seen by the workmen:

The nature and the cause of the dispute is that the said Company and its employees are unable to arrive at an agreement defining the conditions of labour, the wages to be paid, the matters affecting the employment by said Company of its men; that the claims or the demands made by the employees...are as follows: That all agreements, conditions, and hours of labour, and rates of wages existing prior to the 31st of March last...shall be renewed with an advance of ten percent on all rates, with a minimum wage of \$2.50 per day for all outside labour, and that all wages shall be paid every two weeks.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 1189. The new Act required that any dispute arising in a public industry shall be submitted to a Conciliation Board, composed of a representative recommended by the disputants (labour and management) with a chairman to be appointed on the recommendation of the members so chosen. In the absence of a recommendation mutually agreeable to both parties, the Minister of Labour was to nominate a chairman. The Board was to be composed within fifteen days of an application from either the employees or the company, and a strike was illegal while the board held its hearings and collected evidence. Thirty days notice was required by either party of any intention to change conditions of employment or any wage schedules. For a discussion of the IDI Act and its successful application to some types of industry and its unsuccessful operation with reference to the coal mines, see Ben M. Selekman, Postponing Strikes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1931).

<sup>54</sup> "Settlement of Disputes Between Western Coal Operators and Employees," LG, Vol. 7, No. 12, June 1907, p. 1390. The application was actually sent on April 5.



On the same day, applications were received on behalf of the employees of the Canadian-American Coal and Coke Company (Frank), the International Coal and Coke Company (Coleman), and the West Canadian Collieries (Lille and Bellevue). By April 15, applications were submitted to the Department of Labour from employees of the three remaining companies of the Western Coal Operators' Association, all worded similarly and to the same effect as the others. On the receipt of the first application, the Minister of Labour, The Hon. Rondolphe Lemieux, acted immediately to establish a Board of Conciliation in accordance with the provisions of the Act. However, in his correspondence to the Manager of the Crow's Nest Pass, from whose employees he received the first application, the Minister requested a nomination from the company, and made his intention known that only one Board for the whole district would be constituted "...as the matters in dispute are identical in the case of the several companies named, it would appear desirable that they should be referred to one Board, provided the interested parties agree..."<sup>55</sup>

The following day, on April 10, the Crow's Nest Pass Company consented to the Minister's intention to establish one Board, but alleged that the employees' application was irregular because procedures were not followed on voting requirements by union members, and also because the union hired a lawyer to represent them on the Board.<sup>56</sup> The company therefore recommended that the Minister act on the companies' application, rather than on the employees.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 1391.

<sup>56</sup> No person could act as a member of the Board who stood for pecuniary gain in the issue. This objection was considered by the Minister, but he ruled that the Union's lawyer, Mr. L.P. Eckstein of Fernie, was not disqualified to act on the Board.



Four of the seven companies chose the same representative while three others chose another nominee.<sup>57</sup> The miners nominated the same person to each board. When these representatives failed to agree on a third member to act as chairman, the Minister appointed Sir William Mulock, former Minister of Labour and Chief Justice of the Ontario Supreme Court. He was appointed on April 22 and the first board was convened on April 30 in Fernie.

Prior to this first meeting, however, strikes had started in all the mines throughout the district, and by April 21, work at all of the companies comprising the Operators' Association had ceased. A week before, on April 15, a few miners at the Crow's Nest Pass misunderstood a circular sent out by the Company stating its intention to apply for a Board of Conciliation. The union responded with a notice which aroused distrust to the new act and its procedures, and as a result, the men ceased work. On April 18, the employees at Frank, Bellevue, and Lille walked out, and during the next three days, the men at the other collieries ceased operations as well.<sup>58</sup>

The scarcity of large supplies of coal for distribution and domestic consumption, and the recent memories of the prolonged Lethbridge strike of the previous year combined to cause widespread alarm throughout the dis-

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<sup>57</sup> For strict compliance with the act, it was necessary to appoint seven separate boards, one for each dispute. The several boards were simply grouped together as one, although strictly speaking, reference should be to the individual boards. See Ibid., p. 1393, note.

<sup>58</sup> After the adjournment on March 5, Vice-President Lewis and Board member Thomas Burke left for Ohio for a district convention there. They returned to District 18 on April 17. Lewis was somewhat annoyed at what he later described as a "very chaotic condition," and alluded to the notice of the Local Union, saying "...I learned that there was not that harmony and unity existing among our members that is so necessary to success." UMW, Proceedings, op. cit., p. 16.





strict and brought on a public outcry for a settlement of the dispute. Under the circumstances, the Minister decided to send his deputy to the District in the hope of securing a resumption of work pending the inquiry by the Board. King arrived on April 23, a full week before the Board started its findings, and began immediate negotiations between L.P. Eckstein and T.L. Parkers, union and management representatives on the Board respectively.

King felt his first duty was to explain the provisions of the new law, and so a meeting of the District Executive Board was held. At this gathering, union officials stated that it was more in ignorance rather than in defiance of the law that a strike had started, as shown by the fact that the District officers did not permit strike benefits to the men who had stopped work. King felt it better to let negotiations continue immediately rather than have the union officials stop the proceedings in order to get the men back to work, but when an agreement was not reached on the 24th as both sides had expected, a mass meeting of the miners was called for April 25 to have Mr. King explain the illegality of their strike action. Other speakers included Frank Sherman, District President; Thomas L. Lewis, International Vice-President; and W.H. Cushing, Minister of Mines and Public Works for Alberta. Remarks were confined to the explanation of the new Act and its application to the present dispute. It was decided to take a vote on returning to work, and that night, the miners voted unanimously to return to their jobs.

That same night, the company informed King that the men should return to work under the same conditions which existed prior to the strike and should wait for the report of the Board of Investigation.<sup>59</sup> Although on

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 1396.





Wednesday night, the Fernie and Coal Creek miners had voted to resume work, contrary to the expectations of the District Executive, the miners at the other collieries voted to remain on strike. This decisive vote, made known on the 27th, was as follows:<sup>60</sup>

<u>Name of Local</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Bankhead	7	126
Canmore	3	101
Lille	7	97
Frank	14	64
Coleman	54	63
Michel	67	111
Lundbreck	39	19
Hillcrest	5	22
Bellevue (estimated)	---	100
Fernie (estimated)	<u>700</u>	<u>---</u>
	896	703

The miners at Fernie and Coal Creek alleged that their vote returning to work was conditional on a majority of the district in favour as well. Notwithstanding their own vote, the Crow's Nest Pass miners decided to remain away from work also.

There were probably several reasons why the vote was so decisive against resumption of work. However, it would seem that the main factor was that the men who did not know that the IDI Act existed, or who did not understand its working, voted against returning to work. On the other hand, those who understood the act as in Fernie, where it was explained to the men, showed respect for its provisions and agreed to return to their jobs.

By the time the official Board of Investigation got underway on

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 1397. It is quite possible that the miners from locals other than Fernie did not know that on April 25, an exchange of letters between Sherman and Lindsay confirmed each side's agreement to abide by the conditions existing before termination of the contract on April 1. The texts of these exchanges are printed in ibid.



Tuesday, April 30, a crisis had arisen because of the coal shortage.<sup>61</sup> The CPR had begun refusing certain classes of shipments, several smelters in British Columbia had closed for lack of fuel, and supplies in many areas for domestic consumption were all but depleted.

King decided that instead of waiting for the Board to work out a settlement, circumstances demanded that immediate action was required. When the results of the adverse vote became known on Saturday, he offered himself as a conciliator in the dispute, and was able to begin negotiations the following day, April 28. He realized that one of the biggest obstacles in the dispute was the mutual distrust and suspicion that existed between the parties, and also their mutual dislike of what they felt was government interference. Nevertheless, he managed to reach the basis of an agreement late Monday afternoon, and obtained from the union officials and the members of the Western Coal Operators' Association a verbal understanding that it was acceptable.<sup>62</sup> The union officers, however, refused to sign a contract without referring the question to a referendum among the District locals, although they promised to strongly recommend its acceptance to the rank and file.

The vote was taken by the men on Thursday, and the membership endorsed

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<sup>61</sup> In point of fact, the Board did not proceed in an official capacity, but rather met informally to let the two parties meet with King. "We learned that the parties themselves, aided by Mr. MacKenzie King, were negotiating a settlement, and we, on our part, decided to defer action in the hope that the happy result which today has been achieved might be reached by the parties themselves..." "Sir William Mulock Addresses Final Meeting of Board of Investigation on Industrial Situation," UMWJ, Vol 18, No. 15, August 22, 1907, p. 7. Mulock's prepared address at the final meeting of the Board is carried in full in this issue.

<sup>62</sup> The work of King in arriving at a satisfactory settlement brought him special praise in the United Mine Workers Journal. "...he is one of the youngest and ablest men in the labour movement. He is the Charles P. Neil of Canada..." Editorial, UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 46, April 5, 1907, p. 4.



the agreement by a vote of 1121 in favour, 744 against. On May 4, the operators signed the agreement, and the District officers signed it two days later. Work resumed on May 7 at all but one mine,<sup>63</sup> and on the same day, the Board of Investigation ended its official inquiry.

The new agreement was to run from April 1, 1907 to March 31, 1909. It provided for a permanent arbitration board composed of representatives of Union and Management to settle disputes arising during the life of the contract. Increases in wages ranging from five to ten percent for different classes of jobs were given, and continuity of the agreement was provided by a clause requiring the parties to meet sixty days prior to March 31, 1909, when the contract expired, to renew or renegotiate the contract.<sup>64</sup> However, the employers won their demand for the open shop--a provision in District 18 agreements which was to remain for over a decade.<sup>65</sup>

Renewal of Contracts Outside District Agreement. The agreement reached on May 7 covered only those mines whose companies were members of the Western Coal Operators' Association and their employees. Two companies operating within District 18 jurisdiction but which did not belong to the Operators' Association also experienced strikes during the year and received intervention through the new IDI Act.

In May the miners of Lethbridge Local 574, UMW, applied for a Board of Conciliation to arrive at a settlement in its dispute with the Alberta

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 1399. The Breckenridge and Lund Coal Company at Lundbreck discontinued operations when the strike was declared. Most of the union men found employment at the other collieries operating in District 18.

<sup>64</sup> For the exact details of the contract and the new wage schedule, see "Text of the Agreement," Ibid., pp. 1404-1405. For the results of the Board's report, see "Report of Board of Conciliation," Ibid., pp. 1402-1403.

<sup>65</sup> Philips, p. 47.





Railway and Irrigation Company. The union proposed a plan for the regulation of disputes during the life of the agreement, similar to the clause inserted in the contract signed with the WCOA. Other demands included full recognition of the United Mine Workers, the check-off of union dues and assessments, the concession of an eight hour work day, and certain other working conditions. The application was signed by Local Union President John R. Galvin and Secretary John A. MacDonald. District President Frank Sherman was nominated for membership on the Board sought under the IDI Act.

On May 27, the Minister consented to the union's request for a Board and notified the company for its recommendation to the Board. The Managing Director protested against the Minister's intention of appointing a Board to settle the question of union recognition, and stated his own intention to settle the other alleged grievances by direct negotiations with the employees, in line with the November agreement.<sup>66</sup>

The Minister overruled the company's opposition, however, stating that,

"...it is quite evident that there is a difference of opinion between the parties as to whether a dispute exists or not, and this of itself, in view of past experience, constitutes to my mind, a sufficient reason for the immediate appointment of a Board..."<sup>67</sup>

This threat from the Minister to proceed with the appointment of the Board brought the parties together, and a settlement was reached on June 1. According to the terms of the agreement, the union received the check-off; an eight hour work day bank to bank, exclusive of half an hour at noon; an increase in wages; and a settlement on certain working conditions.

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<sup>66</sup> "Settlement of Dispute at Lethbridge," LG, Vol. 7, No. 12, June 1907, p. 1416.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1417.



District President Frank Sherman, in wiring the Minister on the agreement, gave credit to the new act for the settlement:

Satisfactory agreement signed today with Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company. No need of Board now, thanks to Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. Congratulations.<sup>68</sup>

A second strike which occurred outside the jurisdiction of the Western Coal Operators' Association took place at Hillcrest, Alberta. In September 1907 the management of Hillcrest Coal and Coke Company and the Local Union 1058, UMWA, broke off negotiations, and the employees applied to the Minister of Labour for the appointment of a Conciliation Board to settle the contract dispute. The following day, a Board was established which consisted of Frank Sherman, on behalf of the employees, and Mr. J.R. McDonald, on behalf of the employers. The Hon Charles W. Fisher, Speaker of the Alberta Assembly, was appointed chairman.<sup>69</sup>

When this Board was unable to reach a settlement, it began to initiate hearings throughout the area on October 8. The Board finished its majority report on October 24, and recommended a minimum wage of \$3.00, concession by the company of the union check-off for dues and assessments, the provision of a grievance procedure to settle disputes during the life of the contract, the allowance of checkweighmen to be paid by the miners from payroll deductions, and full recognition of the United Mine Workers.

A minority report was also submitted by Frank Sherman, in which he disputed the claims made by the company regarding the costs of mining coal and its alleged inability to pay higher rates. Sherman also pointed out the discriminatory practice of the CPR towards small operators by not

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. See also LG, Vol. 8, No. 3, September 1907, p. 337.

<sup>69</sup> LG, Vol. 8, No. 6, December 1907, p. 680.



providing transportation facilities to those mines that refused to reciprocate the railway with rates of only \$2.00 per ton as compared with the standard rate of \$2.40. On all other points, Sherman agreed with the majority report.<sup>70</sup>

The new agreement with the company gave the Local Union full recognition, and the wage scale and conditions of employment closely resembled those recommended in the report of the Board. The agreement was to run from September 1, 1907 to March 31, 1909.

The Agreement signed between District 18 and the Western Coal Operators' Association, and the separate contracts made between District 18 locals and companies operating outside the Association, left the United Mine Workers firmly entrenched in southern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia. In the space of less than five years, the organizational activities of such Binational workers as Harry Bousfield and Peter Patterson had reaped impressive rewards, despite the few setbacks suffered along the way. Three important features of the District Union developed in this first period of the organization's history. These are worth mentioning here.

Firstly, there was the question of leadership within the District Executive. The United Mine Workers of District 18 were very fortunate in having a man like Frank Sherman during these trial periods. He was familiar with union conditions outside the District, having lived with and seen developments in England and Wales where coal mining was also a major industry. Unlike some of his contemporaries, he was a conservative leader who believed in peaceful means to gain bargaining and contract victories.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 683.





He also believed in the general policy of the UMW to provide security and economic gains for the miners, not political gains. Yet despite his ability as a negotiator, he did have some problems keeping the miners satisfied, notably during the Lethbridge strike, when certain radical elements even challenged his political intentions.<sup>71</sup>

A second feature of this period was the close relationship fostered between the District Executive Canada and the Binational Executive in Indianapolis. On different occasions the District Executive referred measures to and sought advice from the Binational President and other officers. This fact, however, should not be construed to mean American domination of a Canadian Union, nor American interference in Canadian trade relations. Indeed, the true relation was one between a particular union local, or between a Binational district and the central organization having North American jurisdiction.<sup>72</sup>

Thirdly, there was the noticeable acceptance of third party intervention in settling industrial disputes. As already noted, even before the IDI Act was passed in 1907, there had been several cases of mediation procedures ranging from the federal Department of Labour to local boards of trade and provincial premiers. Yet as this study will show, third party conciliation procedures eventually were not acceptable to the industry, and the whole machinery of conciliation, effected over the years dating from the Conciliation Act of 1900, came to a halt. The reasons

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<sup>71</sup> "Sherman Wins Reelection," UMWJ, Vol. 17, No. 1, May 31, 1906, p. 1. Sherman had tended his resignation when he learned of the dissatisfaction among certain elements of the district, but received a strong mandate to continue as President at a special district convention.

<sup>72</sup> For an interesting discussion of binational unionism and the relation of the local to the international organization, see Williams, op. cit., pp. 14-17.





for this breakdown need to be considered in a wider perspective, namely the social and economic development of the area.



Chapter IV  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE COAL MINING COMMUNITY

Introduction. A history of trade unionism in the Western Canada coal industry cannot be viewed in isolation from the social conditions existing in the coal communities. Because the economic history of the period does not give a complete picture of the issues affecting labour relations, this chapter looks at what developments took place during 1900-1925 to change and improve the social conditions of the mining communities. On several occasions, the strikes which occurred in different parts of District 18 were caused as much from working and social conditions as from issues such as wages and union recognition.

Secondly, this chapter examines the social environment of the camps, the important features of government regulations, the ethnic backgrounds of the miners, and the importance of the labour press as a cohesive force for the labour unions.

The Social Environment of the Mining Camps. Almost all of the mining camps in District 18 were sparsely populated, self-contained communities usually located near a railway line. In many camps, the coal company held all the land surrounding the mines under lease from the province and could not sell the property; the company, in turn, leased land and houses to the individual miners.<sup>1</sup> In the Crow's Nest Pass, the British Columbia government granted the coal-bearing land to the company on the condition that the price of coal would not exceed \$2 per ton at the mine head. This grant was made to assist the smelters which were required for industrial development and permitted the company to meet the domestic

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 299-300.



coal requirements of the area.<sup>2</sup>

The practice of having the coal companies' hold all land within convenient distance of the mine pithead led to the development in Western Canada of "closed towns." In such towns, all stores, beer parlors, hotels, and service facilities were run either by the operator or under license from him. The company was supposed to supply adequate sewer lines and water supply, but newspaper reports of the period indicate that these facilities were not in good shape. Indeed, it seemed that the only way for the miners to apply pressure on the company to improve conditions was to relate their social conditions to labour-management relations. In point of fact, however, even the miners often neglected to seek some improvement. As a Board of Investigation noted in 1911:

The sanitation of the various mining camps came under the careful investigation of the Board. In a number of camps sanitation has received the careful consideration of the companies, but in regard to the sanitary condition in others, the Chairman found it necessary to call the attention of the local and provincial authorities to the deplorable neglect of the ordinary precautions against disease, dirt, and overcrowding. A company, giving prefunctory attention to these matters, lays itself open to the most serious condemnation and cannot hope to win and retain the respect and cooperation of its employees. The Board but cannot express its profound regret that nowhere could it discern indication of any sincere and earnest attempt on the part of either a company or of a local union to promote the social, moral, and intellectual well-being of the workers in the mines. Earnest and intelligent cooperation here would surely be productive of the best results.<sup>3</sup>

Government regulations helped to improve conditions in some areas, as did the development of municipal governments or Boards of Trade. However, several of the small camps still had problems similar to those described above. Conditions remained so bad in one camp in the Coal Branch

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<sup>2</sup> H.A. Innis and A.R.M. Lower, Settlement, Forest, and Mining Frontiers, "Canada Frontiers of Settlement Series"(Toronto: Macmillan, 1936), IX, p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> "Report of Conciliation Board in District 18," LG, Vol. 12, No. 2, p.157.





that a newly appointed editor of the District Ledger described it "a bleak hole in the foothills."<sup>4</sup>

In describing the social conditions of the mining camps, however, it is necessary to study the problems in their proper perspective. The Evans Royal Commission in Alberta, in its inquiries into living and housing problems in the various camps, concluded that conditions varied from fair to good in the case of better established and older communities to very bad at some of the small, unprofitable mines, whose very survival as a business enterprise was highly precarious.<sup>5</sup>

However, the social problem was that such pioneer conditions led to great discomfort for the miners and their families, and further aggravated their discontent with management, thereby contributing to labour unrest. The Commission felt that improvements would come about only with increased stability in the industry itself.

Housing was continuously the most serious social problem. In most camps, the bunkhouse was the principal form of housing. The fact that these were for the most part owned by the company resulted in a feeling of insecurity and dependence on the part of the miners. Some companies, realizing that the dissatisfaction felt by the employees affected labour relations, made attempts to improve the housing situation.

Most of the towns depended on the provincial police to maintain law and order. During several strikes, the miners alleged that the company paid the police to breakup the picket lines<sup>6</sup> but on the whole, the police detachments were respected. By far the greatest problem faced by the

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<sup>4</sup> Editorial, District Ledger, Vol. 1, No. 15, November 14, 1918, p. 5. Hereinafter referred to as DL.

<sup>5</sup> Report of Alberta Coal Commission, 1925, p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> Philips, No Power Greater, p. 37.



police was liquor control. The District Ledger carried lengthy reports of other crimes such as theft, prostitution, and arson, but these were common to most pioneer towns. Most of the local unions organized social committees to promote entertainment and cultural gatherings.<sup>7</sup>

When prohibition started in Alberta in July, 1916, the whole section of the Crow's Nest Pass in the Rocky Mountain constituency voted to remain "wet." The newspapers carried several stories describing the increase in lawlessness of the area and brought it a reputation of some notoriety.<sup>8</sup> Bootlegging became a serious problem for the police and a favourite hiding place was the local pool rooms.

#### Safety Legislation and Government Controls

Mining has always been one of the most dangerous of trades. For many years, there were more accidents reported in mining than in all the factories and workshops combined, because there was little knowledge of ventilating methods and airing problems, making accidents abnormally high. Another major problem was that as the mines were sunk deeper and deeper into the ground, limited knowledge about timbering and the single entry system caused many mines to sink in. This situation became so bad in District 18 that a western member of parliament, considered by the miners to be their advocate in the House of Commons, sponsored a bill to compel mine owners to have a double entry to the mine.<sup>9</sup>

Mine explosions could occur where only one-half of one percent of gas was in the air, a quantity so small that it was undetectable with an

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<sup>7</sup> Andy A. Denotter, "A Social History of the Alberta Coal Branch," (M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Alberta, 1967), p. 127.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Cousins, "A History of the Crow's Nest Pass," (M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Alberta, 1952), p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> LG, Vol. 22, No. 8, February 1922, p. 147.



ordinary safety lamp. The gas, combined with the proper quantities of coal dust and air, was sufficiently flammable to cause tremendous explosions. By 1918, some 308 men had lost their lives in the Crow's Nest Pass alone through gas leaks, explosions, or bumps.<sup>10</sup> Between 1900 and 1922, for every million tons of coal produced in District 18, there were an average of four deaths and twice that many injuries.<sup>11</sup>

The government, of course, attempted to provide some measure of safety legislation and control over conditions to lessen the fatality rates, but often these were either ignored by the companies or not enforced by the inspectors. As early as 1905, James Hawthornthwaite introduced an amendment to the British Columbia Coal Mines Regulation Act to restrict working hours to eight hour shifts.<sup>12</sup> One of the purposes of this bill was to allow some time to air the mines and let the gas disperse.

A study conducted in 1917 by the University of Alberta found that the Fernie mines of the Crow's Nest Pass were the most dangerous in the world, including the mines of Wales and England. This report alleged that the Fernie mines had 200 percent more gas than in any other workings. The greatest danger came from men who worked a second shift, and this was when most of the worst accidents occurred. When the gas accumulations did not disperse, what were known as "bumps" occurred, that is, when pressure from gas beneath the coal floor steadily pushed forward. Sometimes, the gas was pushed forward which imprisoned men or caused explosions. The

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<sup>10</sup> "Figures on Deaths from Gas," DL, Vol. 1, No. 6, September 12, 1918, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> LG, Vol. 22, No. 2, February 1922, p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> Philips, No Power Greater, p. 43.





University report claimed that the immediate cause was not light but merely the immense pressure of the gas.<sup>13</sup>

The first major legislation affecting the coal mines of Alberta was the Coal Mines Act of 1906. Among the provisions of this act were the requirements for registration of all employees; the prohibition of single shafts except in certain areas; the provision of proper apparatus for elevators in the shafts; and the prohibition of females as employees and boys under 12 years of age, or boys between 12 and 16 who were unable to read and write and could not pass a specified educational examination. Furthermore, this act provided the employment of competent officials to check the mines, to appoint checkweighers, and to require mine owners to supply the Minister of Mines any such information as may be required of them.<sup>14</sup>

The Coal Mines Act was amended in 1908 to give more stringent protection of employees.<sup>15</sup> Shafts could not be nearer than 100 feet to one another, the previous distance being fifteen yards. Deduction for checkweighmen were permitted from employees' payrolls. The clauses concerning mining certificates were made more stringent and the reporting of all accidents was made mandatory. The rules concerning the inspection and ventilation of mines, the use of safety lamps, explosives, timbering, and dressing rooms were also changed for more strict legal application. Moreover, a new clause was added to the Act by which the managers of the mine made available to the men books mentioning the rules governing the mine safety.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Calgary Canadian, as reported in "Dangers at Fernie, B.C.," DL, Vol. 1, No. 3, August 22, 1918, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> LG, Vol. 7, No. 6, December 1906, p. 640.

<sup>15</sup> LG, Vol. 8, No. 12, June 1908, p. 1455. See also ibid., Vol. 8, No. 9, March 1908, p. 1114.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.





The Coal Act of 1906 and its amended form of 1908 remained in effect as the principal regulatory mechanism until 1913. This 1913 act was based on the findings of a three-man commission representing the employers, the employees, and the Government which studied the British Coal Act of 1909 and modified it to fit conditions in Alberta.<sup>17</sup> The guiding principle of the Commission's report was safety, as shown by the numerous references to hazards and dangers mentioned in the Act. The principal reason why the Commission based its own report on the British Act was that Great Britain had the lowest rate of accidents of any coal producing country in the world.<sup>18</sup>

According to the clauses of the new Act, the provincial government was given authority to check on the number of hours each miner worked, and supervise such things as the operation of mines, the mine inspectors, and safety equipment.

The provisions of the new act were administered by the Alberta Mines Branch, which was transferred to the Department of the Provincial Secretary from the Department of Public Works. The Mines Branch provided inspectors for detailed examination of safety regulations and conditions at the individual mines. An important feature of the new Act provided for the publication of Annual Reports--a detailed statistical analysis of all facets of production, accidents, and other pertinent mining information.

In 1912, the first mine rescue work was established in Alberta. The British Columbia miners of District 18 had formed a unit trained to handle conditions during an explosion or an accident in the mine. On December 9, 1910, a disastrous explosion occurred at No. 1 mine of Western Canadian

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of the findings of the British Coal Commission and the Act of 1909, see R. Page Arnot, The Miners: Years of Struggle (New York: August M. Kelly, 1966).

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Alberta Coal Commission, 1925, p. 274.



Collieries at Bellevue and forty-six men became trapped.<sup>19</sup> A volunteer rescue team of the British Columbia miners at Crow's Nest Pass assisted in the rescue service and one miner in the rescue party lost his life. An investigation carried out by the government disclosed that the Alberta miners had no form of training for rescue work and had virtually no equipment to perform rescue duties.

As a result, it was arranged to have the Government and the mine operators equip and maintain jointly one mine rescue car. By 1925, this service had expanded to include four rescue cars and seven stations with one hundred sets of breathing apparatus and first aid work. After 1918, the rescue work was taken over by the Workmen's Compensation Board.<sup>20</sup>

The Workman's Compensation Board was established in British Columbia in 1916 and in Alberta in 1918 to cover accidents and injuries to miners suffered on the job by providing monetary compensation. In this way, the workers would be saved the expense of proving in court the liability of the employer and in the case of fatality, the Act provided the dependents with a pension.<sup>21</sup> Generally speaking, the Compensation acts were well received in both provinces by employer and union men alike.

According to the terms of the Compensation Act, the employer and the government contributed to a central fund. Applications were made to the Board, which was composed of three men appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council; it gave compensation on the basis of workman's salary scale. British Columbia had the lowest waiting period before compensation of any province in Canada, while Alberta had the second highest

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<sup>19</sup> LG, Vol. 11, No. 7, January 1911, p. 800. See also Editorial, UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 36, January 19, 1911, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Alberta Coal Commission, p. 310.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 286.



liability payment per week--\$21.84.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the provincial legislation affecting the coal mines, there was the legislative authority of the Federal Government. The spheres of influence of both the province and the Federal government were determined by the British North America Act, Sections 91 and 92.<sup>23</sup> Briefly stated, the provinces had control over all operational aspects of the mines and indirect taxation on output, while the federal government established regulations for the issue of permits to mine coal for domestic purposes. The Evans Commission classified the regulations of the Dominion into the following: freehold without royalty; freehold with royalty of seven cents per ton; leasehold with royalty of five cents per ton and annual rental of one dollar per acre. However, the Evans Commission found that there were so many variations in force because of different Orders-In-Council that it recommended "it would be a very wise thing...if all general regulations for leasing of coal lands were immediately suspended; so that pending the transfer to the province and thereafter until the province can formulate its definite policy, any applications for such leases would become a matter of direct individual action by Order-In-Council."<sup>24</sup>

In addition to leasing, the federal government controlled customs duty on coal and anti-dumping provisions, and provided subsidies to assist in the transportation of coal. A further role of the Federal Government involved the control of pricing and wage adjustments during emergencies and war conditions.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Workman's Compensation Act and its provisions in relation to those in other provinces, see ibid., pp. 286-311.

<sup>23</sup> These constitutional aspects of jurisdictional control are set out in detail in Report of Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 521-522.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>25</sup> Infra., Chapter VI.





Labour Mobility. A major policy of the UMW was to organize all coal fields of North America in order to prevent labour mobility from working to the disadvantage of unionized fields. This in effect meant that the Binational had to have a nation-wide agreement since the coal market, as already noted, was North American in its boundaries. When this proved impossible, the agreements reached in the CCF where most miners were unionized provided the basis of contracts in other districts, such as District 18.

An important factor influencing the social conditions of the coal communities was that of labour mobility. Not only was there increased immigration for European labourers into Western Canada, but also a large influx of workers from Ontario and the Maritimes, particularly from the coal fields of Nova Scotia.

This propensity of workers to move from one area to another, and even from one mine to another mine depending on company conditions, caused great problems for UMW organizers. District 18 officials attempted to keep membership lists at each local, but with so many workers moving on almost a continuous basis, the maintenance of accurate records was next to impossible. Numerous references were made in the labour papers warning workers not to enter the District because of a shortage of work places, or in times of a strike, to keep out strike breakers.

Unfortunately for the UMW, new immigrants or non-unionized workers continuously moved into District 18 and competed in some areas with unionized mines. The two major areas where this occurred were in the Edmonton and Drumheller fields.



## Nationalities and Ethnic Origins of Miners

An inquiry into the socio-economic characteristics of the coal mining communities should include some analysis of the ethnic origins of the miners and their families, because so many nationalities were represented in the unions. A major difficulty, however, in determining the ethnic background of miners is the lack of adequate census data in the 1900-1925 period. This same problem was solved by the Alberta Coal Commission by conducting a questionnaire to coal operators in District 18. The replies were not complete and the division of nationalities was not uniform, but the data was sufficient for a rough average. The Commission gave the following breakdown:<sup>26</sup>

TABLE 1

### Nationality of Mine Workmen in Mines of District 18

CROWSNEST DIVISION		LETHBRIDGE DIVISION	
	%		%
British	44	British	40
American	1	American	2
Slovak	23	Slovak	26
French and Belgium	7	Russian	3
Italian	14.5	Polak	3
Russian	2	Japanese	3
Other Europeans	8.5	Italian	15
		Other Europeans	8
MOUNTAIN PARK DIVISION		DRUMHELLER DIVISION	
	%		%
British	41.5	British	61
Italian	17.5	Ukrainian	11
American	1	Finns	1
Austrian	2	Russian	5
Slovak	11	Slovak	10
Ukrainian	10	Italian	3
Serbian	13	American	2
Other Europeans	4	Other Europeans	7

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 180.



Table 1 Continued...

BRAZEAU DIVISION		EDMONTON DIVISION	
	%		%
British	44.5	British	60
Italian	25.5	American	1
American	2	Ukrainian	1
Ukrainian	4	Polish	1
Austrian	13.5	Russian	16
French and Belgian	5.5	Austrian	1
Other Europeans	5	German	3
		Belgian	2
		Swiss	8
		Other Europeans	7

According to the above classification, British included both natural-born Canadians and miners who emigrated from the old country. Breaking the categories into Canadian-born and immigrants, the commission found that about 43 percent of the mine workers in Canada were Canadian-born and 57 percent were immigrants. In Alberta, coal miners and mine labourers comprised 9.5 percent of the total workforce, but 90.5 percent of these workers were immigrants.<sup>27</sup>

Two inferences can be made from these figures. Firstly, the widely different backgrounds of the miners greatly influenced the culture of the coal mining communities. Coming to Canada as they did in search of new opportunities for a livelihood, the immigrants were forced to reject some of their traditional ideals and to retain others. Their new environment forced on them rules and regulations which must have seemed very strange and difficult to understand. However, it would appear from the reports carried in the labour press and correspondence to binational headquarters that the foreign-speaking element mixed with the English miners without too much difficulty.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 179.



Secondly, the large percentage of foreign-speaking workers in and around the mines of District 18 made it necessary for the United Mine Workers to have organizers who could converse in the foreign languages.<sup>28</sup> As early as 1903, Harry Bousfield, the first organizer from Binational headquarters to work District 18, reported that men fluent in Japanese and Italian were needed to explain the benefits of organized labour.<sup>29</sup> As District 18 expanded and the number of locals grew, the number of foreign-speaking workers also increased. This led to a recommendation made to the Editor of the United Mine Workers Journal by David Rees, Secretary of the Fernie Local to print official circulars and special notices in English, Slavonian, and Italian.<sup>30</sup> This policy was later carried out.

However, the problems of educating the foreign-speaking elements to union organization and regulations was not restricted to District 18. In fact, almost without exception, the respective Presidents of the Binational referred to the issue in their annual reports. The following comment was typical:

The foreign-speaking mine workers have the same interest in the UMW as all others who are members, and when its advantages are pointed out, evince a keen desire to become fully acquainted with its method of doing business. It is our duty to give them every reasonable opportunity of understanding the mission of the union and the rules governing our employment in and around the mines.

There should be issued to all foreign-speaking members, in their own languages, circulars explaining the principles of the UMW, the purpose for which it is organized, and the benefits for which have accrued to us by reason of having an organization. There should also be printed in the various languages the joint agreements covering territory in which the foreign-speaking mine workers reside. Those members of the organization should be made to feel that we have a greater interest in them than merely to have them become members of the union...

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Fernie Ledger, as reported in "Fernie Labour Notes," UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 36, January 16, 1908, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter III, supra.

<sup>30</sup> Editorial, UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 50, April 27, 1911, p. 4.





Of the 700,000 mine workers...it is safe to say that at least one-third of them do not speak the English language. This vast army of foreign-speaking men are wage-earners and struggle side by side with us for the necessities of life. If those who work in the mines cannot read the English language, then so long as they can read their own language, it is our business as a matter of protection...<sup>31</sup>

The Labour Press. The labour press played an important role in integrating the several coal-mining communities in District 18 and maintaining ties between the district union with the binational organization.

Labour newspapers from 1900-1925 had a consistently high fatality rate, and the coal-mining press was no exception.<sup>32</sup> One of the earliest newspapers to devote special attention to the needs of the coal mining communities, at that time centered mostly in the Crow's Nest Pass area, was The Ledge, published in Fernie. In 1905 The Ledge gave way to a new publisher, a Mr. E. Lowrie, who changed the masthead to the Fernie Ledger, and published it as a bi-monthly. In 1908, District 18 officials decided to take over the Fernie Ledger as the union organ and changed the name to the District Ledger, published semi-monthly. District 18 continued to publish the District Ledger until 1915, when on July 25, it was forced to cease printing because of "financial stringency."<sup>33</sup>

The union revived the District Ledger in August 1918 and published it on a weekly basis. However, the paper went out of existence permanently after a year's publication when the One Big Union replaced the United Mine Workers in many of the locals.

<sup>31</sup> "President Lewis' Report," UMW, Proceedings, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 36, January 20, 1910, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> For a more complete review of the Canadian Labour press and the details of publication of specific issues, see Robbins L. Elliott, "The Canadian Labour Press from 1867: A Chronological Annotated Directory," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 14, 1948, pp. 220-245.

<sup>33</sup> LG, Vol. 16, No. 2, August 1915, p. 166.



Probably the most important labour paper of the period was the United Mine Workers Journal, published weekly from Indianapolis by the UMWA. The Journal carried reports on a regular basis from each district, written by the "press committees" of the district organization. However, any official communication within the district was often published in full, and the paper solicited comments and stories from individual miners. In addition, the paper carried complete reports of all conventions and Executive meetings, complete correspondence and reports from district organizers establishing new locals, and financial records of the binational union and strike assistance to the various districts.

Furthermore, the Journal published editorial comment from other union papers, both in North America and in Europe, as well as government reports and documents. Reports from District 18 were very regular, and included correspondence from individuals of topical interest, editorials from Canadian newspapers, press reports of district conventions, and correspondence from organizers, District Officials, and International Board members, as well as speeches made by politicians and government reports, usually from the Labour Gazette.

Other papers that seemed to receive important consideration in labour circles were the One Big Union Monthly Bulletin, the B.C. Federationist, the Calgary Herald, and the Edmonton Free Press.

Description of Working Conditions. The coal mines of District 18 were essentially the same as those existing in other coal camps of North America. The mines were virtual cities built underneath the surface of the earth, with huge tunnels ressembling the main streets and trunk lines or passages running from the haulage way. Where the coal veins were situated deep in the interior, as in the Crow's Nest Pass, the miners



entered the mines by descending a shaft elevator. If the coal was located near the surface (strip mines), the miners entered on foot or in a mine car directly into the main haulage way.<sup>34</sup>

Close to the entry of the mine was a huge air pump pushing fresh air into the mine and drawing stale air out over an "air course," a passage parallel to the main haulage way. Together, these two arteries provided the channels for a complete circulation of air. During the busy part of the coal season, from about mid-September to late April, the mines were operated in three shifts for six days a week. These shifts ran from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, from four until midnight and from midnight until eight the following morning. Lunches were taken underground, and half-hour breaks were allowed. The 1908 Coal Mines Act forbade the miners to work more than one eight hour shift in a twenty-four hour period, although some miners ignored this regulation.

The darkness of the mine was relieved only by the safety lamp on the miner's cap. He often had to work in a cramped position, and usually with not more than one worker with him.<sup>35</sup> This meant that the workers were scattered over large areas, and sometimes at various depths, depending on the seams in the mines.

The corridors of the mines had tracks for hauling cars to carry the coal through the main haulage way to the outside tippie, where the coal was weighed and dumped for shipping. (By 1917, many of these haulage cars were electrically powered.) The roof of the seams were braced with

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<sup>34</sup> For the types of access to the various mines and the roof and floor conditions existing in District 18, see Report of Alberta Coal Commission, pp. 62-64.

<sup>35</sup> For a brief description of coal mining as an occupation, see Ben M. Selekman & Mary Van Kleeck, Employees' Representation in Coal Mines (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1924), pp. 41-55.





props and crossbars--the props varying from six to eighteen inches in diameter and placed at regular intervals depending on the firmness of the roof.<sup>36</sup>

The very nature of the working place, then, was often a course of much dispute among the miners, since the amount of coal mined materially affected the wages paid the miners. A working place which took extra timbering and cross-cuts because of a soft roof, or which had a seam with a great deal of rock and shale mixed with the coal, took much more time than a working place where the coal seam was clean and had a solid roof. In the same way, wet places, high and low coal, and inefficient and careless drivers of the hauling cars all affected the amount of coal the miner could load.

Aside from conditions existing within the mines, such factors as availability of railway cars, size of timber for pillars and cross cuts, and adequate supplies of such things as rails, ties, and spikes, all affected how much work the miner could do in a given day, and indeed, if he could work at all. Unfortunately, on many occasions minor grievances over these issues were allowed to accumulate and become major disputes, so that relations between the miners and the management could only deteriorate. As one study noted of the coal industry:

It is an industry where disputes of more or less importance constantly arise. It seems probable, moreover, that the nature of the work creates a state of mind which results in the aggravation of grievances. We do not wish to overdraw the picture, but coal mining is essentially a dirty, unpleasant, and extremely hazardous occupation...He does not know when a section of the roof may cave in and crush him, or leave him crippled and dependent for life; or when explosive gas may be accidentally ignited, and burn him and

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<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed description of these supports, see LG, Vol. 12, No. 7, January 1912, pp. 664-665.



his fellow-workers to death, or cause the mine to cave in to such an extent that it will be impossible for a rescue party to get near him and his friends...

The isolation, the darkness underground, the constant presence of danger, make a miner's grievances seem bigger than mere differences of opinion about payments for tasks to be done or the desirability of the workplace assigned to him.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Selekman & Van Kleeck, op. cit., pp. 53-54.



## Chapter V

### THE UNITED MINE WORKERS AS A BARGAINING AGENT: EXPANSION OF DISTRICT 18

When the United Mine Workers secured its district-wide agreement on May 4, 1907, the paid-up membership amounted to 2313 and the union had eighteen organized locals throughout southern Alberta and British Columbia.<sup>1</sup>

However, there were only seven companies which belonged to the Western Coal Operators' Association, which had conceded full recognition to the UMW as the official bargaining agent for the miners of these companies. This meant, therefore, that there were several companies throughout the district at which the UMW had established locals but which did not have membership in the WCOA.

Shortly after the district agreement was signed, officials of District 18 decided to expand the jurisdiction of the UMW to all camps in the Western provinces. Of the coal mining centers not yet organized, two fields received the immediate attention of the UMW. The first was the coal areas of Saskatchewan, and the second was the strip field near Edmonton.

At this time, coal mining in Saskatchewan was not a big industry and the province depended heavily on imports from southern Alberta. In February of 1908, the province had only 19 mines in operation, producing a total of only 189,428 tons in the previous twelve months.<sup>2</sup>

Production in Saskatchewan was centered primarily in the Estevan area with some output in the Wood-Mountain-Willowbunch and in the Cypress Hills areas. Almost all of the coal produced was lignite. Output had begun there as early as 1892 but amounted to only 5400 tons. By 1900 production

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<sup>1</sup> "Secretary-Wilson's Report," UMW Proceedings, 19th Annual Convention, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 37, January 23, 1908, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "The Coal Mining Industry," LG, Vol. 9, No. 8, February 1909, p. 891.



had increased to 40,500 tons, and in 1911, reached 206,799 tons.<sup>3</sup>

Despite steady increase in production, the province had to rely on Alberta for its fuel supply supply. After the Lethbridge strike in 1907, however, the government of Saskatchewan attempted to prevent a recurrence of the severe scarcity of coal of the previous year by stock-piling huge quantities of coal before winter settled in. Accordingly, on July 20, 1907, the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. W.R. Motherwell, issued a circular to all the coal companies in Western Canada asking them to send a sufficient fuel supply during the summer when transportation would be available. To notify the public of his plans the Minister began a "Buy Your Coal Now" campaign in the provincial newspapers.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time these notices were published, the United Mine Workers were attempting to establish locals in the Saskatchewan mines. District President Frank Sherman and Binational Organizer Alex Susnar were the first officers of District 18 to expand the jurisdiction of the UMW into the Saskatchewan coal fields. They succeeded in organizing three locals: Roche Percee (Union Local 2648), Taylorton (Union Local 2519), and Bienfait (Local Union 2672).<sup>5</sup>

Within six months after the establishment of these locals, the United Mine Workers applied for a Board of Investigation under the IDI Act to adjust their dispute with the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Coal Company at Bienfait and the Western Dominion Collieries at Taylorton. The union claimed it was unable to secure a contract for the miners under its jur-

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<sup>3</sup> For statistics of coal production in Saskatchewan from 1892-1944, see Appendix.

<sup>4</sup> "The Fuel Supply in Saskatchewan," LG, Vol. 8, No. 2, August, 1907, pp. 208-209. See also "The Fuel Supply in Western Canada--Action of Government of Saskatchewan," Ibid., October, 1907, pp. 442-443.

<sup>5</sup> UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 37, January 23, 1908, p. 8.





isdiction. The District officers wanted full recognition of the United Mine Workers, standard wages of the District existing in the other lignite fields, and the acceptance of the eight hour working day. The miners' application, sent to the Minister of Labour on March 16, was signed by District Vice-President John R. Galvin and Joseph Twist, Secretary of the Local Union at Bienfait.<sup>6</sup>

The companies appointed Mr. G.W. Crowe as their representative on the Conciliation Board, while Frank Sherman served for the union. Mr. Justice Dawson of Winnipeg acted as Chairman. There was some delay in the preparation of the report, which wasn't finished until November 26. In its majority report, the Board offered no opinion on the recognition of the union, suggested that the eight hour day not be followed, and recommended that the rates of the other mines in Saskatchewan, not southern Alberta, be used at Bienfait and Taylorton.<sup>7</sup>

A minority report was submitted by Frank Sherman, who claimed that the union should be given recognition as the miners' bargaining agent, and that since the same profits were made in Saskatchewan mines as in Southern Alberta, the same wage scale should apply.<sup>8</sup> Despite the setback, the miners did not go out on strike. Presumably they were awaiting renewal of the district agreement in April of the following year, with negotiations to commence at the end of February.

Organization in the Edmonton Area. Coal in Edmonton's area was lignite or "domestic" of excellent quality. The seams were mainly strip

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<sup>6</sup> LG, Vol. 8, No. 10, April 1908, p. 1227; LG, Vol. 8, No. 9, May 1908, p. 1345.

<sup>7</sup> "Report of the Board in Case of Dispute at Bienfait," LG, Vol. 9, No. 7, pp. 703-705.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 705.



mining, and varied from ten to twenty feet in depth and ten to fourteen feet in thickness.<sup>9</sup>

In 1908 there were two companies producing coal on a commercial scale, the Standard Coal Company of Edmonton, and the Alberta Coal Company, situated about a mile from the city. Both the Grand Truck Railroad and the Canadian Pacific had lines in this area and were the principal coal consumers. The Canadian Northern Railroad purchased large coal deposits in 1909 on the Brazeau River about 100 miles due west of Edmonton, and started to construct a line to the capital shortly after.

The first serious organizational efforts by the UMW were made in 1908 when two District organizers, James Brovey and T.E. James, established Local Union 2540 at the Standard Coal Company in May. The Local had only sixty members, and several miners refused to join. The conditions in the area were described as terrible and deplorable, and District officials advised other miners contemplating working in the field not to go until sweeping changes were made and conditions improved.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after the organization of the UMW Local, the miners attempted to secure a contract with the Standard Coal Company. A dispute over the wage scale and the working conditions led to an application for a Conciliation Board by Organizer James and the Secretary of the local, J.J. McDevitt. The Department of Labour received the application on May 2, and appointed the Board on May 19, which consisted of Frank Sherman, representing the miners, Frank B. Smith, the company, and the Hon. Mr. Justice

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<sup>9</sup> For a comparison of the strip mines of Edmonton and the shaft mines of the Dominion Coal Company in Nova Scotia, see "Great Coal Fields of the Canadian West," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 2, May 20, 1909, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> "District 18 Officers Doing Good Work," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 31, December 16, 1909, p. 3.



Taylor of Edmonton, acting as Chairman.<sup>11</sup>

Although the Board presented its official report on July 22, the company and the union arrived at a satisfactory settlement on working conditions and the wage issue on their own. The company had maintained it could not compete with other companies and still pay the district wage schedule. Sherman and the Union officers agreed, and accepted a compromise settlement with a wage rate below the District scale. The Board members decided to let the matter rest and did not call evidence on the wage issue.<sup>12</sup>

However, the agreement did not last long, and several miners staged walkouts without union authorization. The District officers attempted to restore order by having the company join the Coal Operators' Association, and held a meeting with the Superintendent. No decision was made to join the WCOA and the union local remained weak and disorganized. Although another local was established in Edmonton, UMW Local 2655, the District officials did not press for complete organization of the Edmonton fields until 1920.

During this same period, District organizers were attempting to charter locals in southern Alberta and in Nicola Valley, B.C. At Diamond City, located 10 miles west of Lethbridge, organizer Thomas James presided over the establishment of Local Union 2178. The Local President was A.G. Enchcliff and the Secretary, P. Kelly. About 100 miners were enrolled.

In 1909 other locals were organized at the Rocks Springs colliery of the Alberta Consolidated Company at Taber (Local Union 2299), and at

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<sup>11</sup> LG, Vol. 8, No. 12, June 1908, p. 1450.

<sup>12</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 2, August 1908, pp. 160-161.





Nicola Valley Coal and Coke Company (Merritt Union 2627).<sup>13</sup> At both Taber and Nicola Valley, strikes occurred over recognition of the UMW as the bargaining agent, and both disputes were settled through proceedings under the IDI Act of 1907.<sup>14</sup>

Negotiations for Renewal of the District Agreement. The terms of settlement of the district agreement signed on May 4, 1907, included a clause providing for continuity of the contract by which both sides would meet sixty days prior to the termination date on March 31, 1909, to end or renew the agreement. Accordingly, on January 12, 1909, a committee of the miners and the operators met in Lethbridge to begin negotiations, and it was decided to have the Scale Committee start the detailed bargaining at MacLeod, Alberta, on March 2.<sup>15</sup>

The operators were represented by W.F. McNeil, Canmore; J.D. Hurd, Fernie, Lewis Stockett, WCOA President; P.L. Naismith, Lethbridge; W.L. Hamilton, Frank; and O.E.S. Whiteside, Coleman. The miners were represented on the committee by Frank Sherman, A.J. Carter, W. Whitehouse, William Dunlap, J.R. Galvin, W. Graham, Clem Stubbs, and Thomas Biggs.<sup>16</sup>

The scale committee met again on March 16 at MacLeod, but negotiations became complicated and talks broke off shortly after. The first complicating factor was the illness of District President Frank Sherman,

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<sup>13</sup> "President Powell, District 18, on the Wing," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 16, August 26, 1909. The manager of the company at Nicola Valley was W.H. Armstrong, who was later to become Director of Coal Operations during the war. President Powell, who had succeeded Frank Sherman in July, met with Binational Board member John Morgan and Ernest Cusworth, Secretary of District 10 (Washington) concerning organization of Vancouver Island. However, no decision was made at that time.

<sup>14</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 7, January 1909, pp. 787-789.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes, WCOA, Second Annual Meeting, Lethbridge, January 12, 1909. Lewis Stockett was reelected President of the Association at this same meeting, held in the afternoon after the negotiations with the miners.

<sup>16</sup> "New Agreement Anxiously Awaited," UMWJ, Vol. 19, No. 47, Apr. 1, 1909, p. 2.



who had to withdraw from the negotiations. His place was taken by Vice-President J.R. Galvin.<sup>17</sup> A second complicating factor was the withdrawal by J.J. Hill, operator of the Crow's Nest Pass Company, from the WCOA on March 2. The reason for this action is not clear, but perhaps it appeared to Hill that a strike in District 18 was inevitable. Even a strike of short duration, according to one observer, would have crippled his company at that time, so Hill decided to negotiate a settlement with the union at Michel and Fernie and let the other operators reach an agreement on any terms they desired.<sup>18</sup>

The Crow's Nest Pass Company came to an agreement with the employees of its three collieries on March 30, 1909. The vote, taken the previous day, was as follows:<sup>19</sup>

	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Majority</u>
Fernie	364	195	169
Michel	459	288	171
Carbonado	2	66	64*

Majority for: 286  
\*Carbonado majority against

<sup>17</sup> Sherman had been sick for some time. He had been an unsuccessful candidate in the 1908 Federal election, running as a socialist candidate in Calgary. After the Binational convention in 1909, his doctor told him to slow down, but he wanted to participate in the district negotiations in March. His health continued to deteriorate, and he resigned as President of District 18 on June 16, 1909. He died on October 8, 1909. In the ensuing District elections, William Powell succeeded to the presidency, Clem Stubbs became Vice-President, and A.J. Carter remained as Secretary. For eulogies of Sherman and his work as President of District 18, see "Tribute to the Life of Frank H. Sherman," and "The Funeral of Frank H. Sherman," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 25, October 28, 1909, pp. 1 and 3.

<sup>18</sup> A tragic fire swept through Fernie on August 1 and 2, 1908, causing damage valued at over three million dollars, leaving some 5,000 people homeless and numerous victims burned. Loss to the Crow's Nest Pass Company was estimated at \$300,000. It was probably for this reason, therefore, that Hill decided to leave the WCOA and make a separate settlement with the union. For details of the fire and the damage which resulted, see "Disastrous Forest Fire in East Kootenay, B.C.," LG, Vol. 8, No. 3., September 1908, pp. 322-323; Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 19, No. 15, August 20, 1908, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> District Ledger, as reported in "Agreement Signed in District 18," UMWJ, Vol. 19, No. 49, April 15, 1909, p. 1.



According to the terms of settlement, the contract was to run for another two years, until April 1, 1911. A dispatch from the District Ledger described some of the changes in the new contract:<sup>20</sup>

1) The general working conditions at Michel have been altered, which will mean much to the men as new conditions will enable them to make more money at their jobs.

2) At Fernie, the timber question has been altered and in future, all timbers will be delivered at the face.

3) The pay day arrangements have been altered. In future, when the 15th of the month falls on a Sunday, the men will receive their pay on the 14th, which will be Saturday, instead of having to wait until the following Saturday, as in the past. This of course is only a minor change, as the incident only occurs about twice in a year.

4) The handling of coal in chutes which has been a source of grievance in the past, will hereafter be done by the company, which will mean much more to the miners.

5) The backhand question at Michel will be decided by ballot vote, and the company is willing to abide by the men's decision.

Other clauses in the contract covered changes in holidays, checkweighmen, tool sharpening, and timbering, and a provision that neither party could alter any form of the contract, unless the other side had agreed to the change in writing prior to the alteration being implemented.<sup>21</sup>

Probably the most significant provision in the contract, however, was the agreement made by General Manager Hurd to accept a discrimination clause by which members of the United Mine Workers would receive priority in hiring, and a compromise was reached on the open shop provision. Henceforth, the Crow's Nest Pass Company would respect the closed shop clause laid down by the UMW.

The negotiations between the officials of District 18 and the WCOA

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> This last clause was desired by both parties because of disagreements which had occurred at Michel and Fernie on interpretations of the previous contracts. For details of these disputes, see LG, Vol. 18, No. 12, June 1908, pp. 1472-1473; and Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 19, No. 4, June 4, 1908, p. 7.





had continued on an intermittent basis after March 16. Vice-President Galvin, heading the bargaining unit for the miners, was able to arrive at a satisfactory settlement which retained the provision for an "open shop" and discrimination clause of the previous contract.<sup>22</sup> This agreement was submitted to the locals of District 18--exclusive of those at the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company--for ratification. The results of the vote, taken on March 29 before the agreement signed at the Crow's Nest Pass, was as follows:<sup>23</sup>

	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Majority For</u>	<u>Majority Against</u>
Bankhead	134	56	78	
Canmore	23	78		55
Coleman	162	68	94	
Bellevue	135	60	75	
Lille	52	120		168
Passburg	20	20		
Hillcrest			12	
Lethbridge	88	69	19	
Hosmer	<u>156</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>      </u>
	770	573	332	123

Majority For--209

Meanwhile, in Fernie, shortly after District President Sherman signed the contract at the Crow's Nest Pass, he learned about the vote taken on the "MacLeod Agreement," as it was called. District officials were doubtful over whether the referendum was actually a ratification, since less than half of the eligible miners voted, so Sherman thought it best to have the other companies agree to the provisions of the Crow's Nest Pass agreement, especially in regard to the closed shop and the discrimination clauses. He therefore conveyed the following message to the WCOA on March 31, 1909,

<sup>22</sup> "Miners Strike at Call of District President," UMWJ, Vol. 19, No. 49, April 15, 1909, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> "Termination of Agreement in Case of Western Coal Mines," LG, Vol. 9, No. 10, April 1909, p. 1108.





the date of expiration of the 1907 agreement:<sup>24</sup>

MacLeod, Alta., March 31st, 1909

I beg to inform you that the workmen employed by the Western Coal Operators' Association, in their various mines, coke ovens, and outside plants, have been instructed to suspend operations at the expiration of their agreement, until such time as a satisfactory agreement is arrived at between District No. 18 and the companies comprising your Association.

We are ready, at any time, to enter into further negotiations upon the lines as stated by me today while in conference with you.

(Sgd.) F.H. Sherman,  
President Dist. No. 18, U.M.W. of A.

The negotiations at MacLeod abruptly ended and Sherman declared a strike of all men in District 18. The District President did not apply for a Board of Investigation under the IDI Act, presumably because the miners would have a bargaining advantage as long as the Crow's Nest Pass was operating while its competitors, comprising the WCOA, were shut down with a district wide strike involving over 2500 men.

Lewis Stockett, President of the WCOA, immediately protested Sherman's decision to call a strike, especially after "...it was agreed that in the event of the agreement being adopted by a majority of the miners, the Presidents of your Union and our Association should arrange for the execution of the Agreement..."<sup>25</sup> That same day, he appealed by telegram to Thomas L. Lewis, President of the Binational in Indianapolis to have the strike called off and the agreement signed. The following day, Lewis confirmed the result of the referendum vote with the following reply to Stockett:<sup>26</sup>

Indianapolis, Ind., April 1, 1909

Wage contract agreed upon will be signed by our representative.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 1109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 1109.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 1110.



We expect at all times representatives of the United Mine Workers to comply with any agreement that is made and this is especially true when ratified by referendum vote of our members. Officials of District 18 will be notified immediately.

(Sgn.) T.L. Lewis

Lewis sent John E. Morgan, Binational Board member, to the district to investigate the dispute as a representative of the Binational in the negotiations.<sup>27</sup> The two parties finally came together by the end of the month, but on May 3, the UMW officials decided to apply for a Board of Investigation under the IDI Act. Frank Sherman was appointed for the miners, Colin MacLeod for the WCOA, and the Rev. Hugh R. Grant of Fernie was made chairman.<sup>28</sup> The appointment of the Board prompted the parties to renew the bargaining, and they reached an agreement on June 30.

According to the terms of settlement, the WCOA agreed to deal exclusively with the United Mine Workers, and a compromise on the discrimination clause was reached.<sup>29</sup>

The wage scale had very few changes and certain penalties were imposed for absence from work and work stoppage. The company conceded improved working conditions and dropped the proposed pay scale reduction at Canmore and Bellevue.<sup>30</sup> The contract ran for a period of two years ending March 31, 1911. It included a provision which called for negotiations to cancel or renew the contract thirty days before the termination of the contract.

The settlement of this strike left the United Mine Workers in a

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<sup>27</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 11, May 1909, p. 1260. Morgan had participated in the first meetings of the scale committee held early in March.

<sup>28</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 12, June 1909, p. 1325.

<sup>29</sup> "Good News from District No. 18," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 9, July 8, 1909, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> LG, Vol. 10, No. 2, August 1909, p. 227. For the exact terms of the agreement, see Ibid., pp. 227-237.



strong position in District 18. The Binational had succeeded in establishing locals at several new camps throughout the area, and after a four month period of hard bargaining and considerable hardship for the miners, the UMW gained the closed shop agreement with the Crow's Nest Pass Company and the seven companies of the WCOA. In a space of only seven years, the UMW had entrenched its position in Western Canada among the coal miners and served as a model for industrial unionism in other areas. In fact, so successful did the Binational consider the organization of District 18 that it dispatched Binational Board member, Pete Patterson, of Fernie B.C., to assist Binational Organizer Harry Bousfield in establishing the United Mine Workers in Nova Scotia.<sup>31</sup>

Relations between the UMW and the WFM. After the United Mine Workers entered District 18 in the coal fields of Alberta and British Columbia in 1903, the Western Federation of Miners retired to the metalliferous mines on Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia. As already described, this action came primarily as a result of the WFM administered strike of 1903.<sup>32</sup>

However, this did not end the relationship between the WFM and the UMW in the coal mines of District 18. The jurisdictional rivalry which existed in 1903 did not continue in Western Canada, and any semblance of dual authority between the two Binationals was clarified in 1908 when they made an agreement affecting a division of responsibility, the UMW to the coal mines, and the WFM to the metalliferous mines.<sup>33</sup>

Within a year of the signing of this agreement, a movement started

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<sup>31</sup> Editorial, UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 21, September 30, 1909, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter II, supra.

<sup>33</sup> D.E. Armstrong and Muriel Armstrong in H.D. Woods, ed., Patterns of Industrial Dispute Settlement in Five Canadian Industries, p. 31.





among the miners of District 6, WFM, and District 18, UMWA, to form a complete amalgamation of the two unions. Documentation on this aspect of binational unionism in Western Canada is sketchy, but it appears that the movement was the result of three factors. Firstly, the heavy strike activity among the coal miners had caused a serious financial burden on the UMW treasury. There were simply not enough miners in the District contributing to the strike fund in relation to the needs. An additional problem was that both the Trail local of the WFM and the Fernie local of the UMW were burdened with large debts through the construction of labour halls. The Fernie local was forced to borrow \$5000.00 from the Binational and became directly responsible to the Binational Executive of the UMW.<sup>34</sup> At their 1909 convention, the WFM passed a resolution expressly forbidding any locals to erect buildings or other projects involving union financing without the permission of the Binational in Denver.<sup>35</sup>

A second factor bringing the miners of the two Binational districts together was their mutual desire to appeal to the government of British Columbia for a bimonthly pay law and an amendment to the Workman's Compensation Act, and for several changes in the Mine Acts of both British Columbia and Alberta, especially concerning the Miners' Examination Board and rescue apparatus in case of accident in the mines.<sup>36</sup>

A third factor was the reciprocal action taken by the two Binationals themselves in exchanging fraternal delegates at their respective annual

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<sup>34</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 9, March 1909, p. 985.

<sup>35</sup> "British Columbia Annual Convention," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 44, March 17, 1910, p. 1. The President of the WFM in British Columbia outlined the problems facing both Binationals in that province. The WFM had 16 locals in the metaliferous mines, all in British Columbia.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



conventions. William Haywood represented the WFM at the United Mine Workers convention and Thomas L. Lewis was a delegate at the WFM convention. Bill Haywood reviewed the history between the miners in both industries, and noted that as early as 1903, a resolution was passed at the Denver convention proposing an amalgamation of both unions. The reasoning behind the proposed union was also given:

We have organized nearly all the unions of coal miners that have been organized in the West, and they have from time to time come in to the UMW, where they properly belong and where we have felt that as an organization representing the mine industry, should organize the unorganized where we find them. I venture to say that all the coal miners' organizations of Colorado have at some time held charters from the WFM.

It would add tremendous strength to us to have the coal miners of the West belong to us as a body. It would place us in a position where we could absolutely dictate terms to the operators; still to join hands with the UMW I know will be of material benefit to form a general industrial organization controlled by the workers for the benefit of society.<sup>37</sup>

A special committee was established at the UMW convention in 1908 to study the proposal for amalgamation of the two unions. This committee, composed of seven miners from each Binational, suggested the transfer of holding cards between the unions, and recommended that the UMW endorse the entry of the Western Federation into the American Federation of Labour.<sup>38</sup>

Support among the coal miners for the amalgamation proposal was not as strong in the UMW as in the WFM, however. President John Mitchell expressed a personal but widely held feeling at the 1908 Binational convention:<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> UMW Proceedings, 19th Annual Convention, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 37, January 23, 1908, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> "Would Merge Miners' Unions," UMWJ, Vol. 20, No. 16, August 26, 1909, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> "President Mitchell's Report," UMW Proceedings, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 18, No. 37, January 23, 1908, p. 3.



Personally I believe that the interests of the miners of the United States and Canada would best be conserved if the Western Federation of Miners were to confine its efforts to the organization of those employed in the metalliferous mines and if the United Mine Workers of America were to continue its policy of organizing only those employed in the coal and coke industry.

I do not agree with the suggestions that have been made that the organizations should consolidate. Metal mining and coal mining are not competitive industries; they bear no relationship to each other except that the men working in both are employed underground and the organized coal miners so far outnumber the organized quartz men that if the two unions were consolidated, the interests of the metalliferous naturally would be subordinated to the interests of the greater number employed in the coal mines.

This opinion prevailed among the UMW, which did go on record in support of the WFM gaining a charter from the AFL.<sup>40</sup> However, despite some support for the merger among certain districts as well as editorial support in the United Mine Workers Journal, the amalgamation did not take place.

In District 18, the coal miners endorsed the affiliation of the WFM with the AFL and the transfer of membership cards at its annual convention held on February 6, 1909.<sup>41</sup>

The 1911 Coal Strike in District 18. In keeping with the terms of the agreement reached in June, 1909, officials of District 18 and the WCOA commenced negotiations for renewal of their contract on March 1 in Calgary --only 30 days before the termination of the two year pact. Hostility between the two parties was evident throughout the early negotiations, with each side claiming that the other had not lived up to the details of the agreement, particularly on matters concerning working conditions, and the

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<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of the labour movement in Canada with respect to the AFL and its Binational charter members, see "The Union Movement in Canada," UMWJ Vol. 20, No. 17, September 1, 1909, p. 1. This report, written by James Simpson, Vice-President of the Trades and Labour Congress, noted that Canadian members of Binational Unions were relieved of the per capita tax paid to the AFL since this money could not secure any legislation from the United States government which would be in the interests of labourers in Canada.

<sup>41</sup> LG, Vol. 9, No. 9, March 1909, p. 985.





eight hour day, bank to bank.<sup>42</sup>

By March 24, bargaining between the parties terminated without any sign of a settlement in sight. The Minister of Labour in Ottawa, the Hon. T.W. Crothers, sent J.D. McNiven of the Department to Fernie in the hope of lending the offices of the government to assist in the negotiations and if possible to establish a Board of Conciliation under the IDI Act. McNiven reported to the Minister that a strike was inevitable on April 1. Crothers thereupon wired the officials of District 18 offering the services of the government, noting "...it is hoped that those in position of authority will cooperate...to prevent any step which might prove of serious injury to the general public as well as prejudicially affect the cause of either parties."<sup>43</sup>

The scale committee of the miners and the operators presented its final report on March 20, and found that the crucial issue in dispute was the closed shop clause made by the Crow's Nest Pass Company when it broke away from the WCOA in 1909.<sup>44</sup> The miners insisted on extending provisions of that agreement into the district contract, even if concessions were granted by the operators in the check-off clauses. On March 9, they had proposed that the new agreement be based on a 5.5 percent wage increase and that a discrimination clause similar to the one in the 1909 agreement

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<sup>42</sup> For a description of the complaints from the miners' point of view, see "Mining Conditions Rotten, says Garner," UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 37, January 26, 1911, p. 8. The operators were bitter over the closed shop clause in the 1909 agreement, and felt the arbitration clause had been thrust upon them. See Armstrong, et.al., op. cit., pp. 48-50.

<sup>43</sup> LG, Vol. 11, No. 11, May 1911, pp. 1246-1247. A special meeting of the WCOA had been called on March 25 to discuss what action should be taken following the failure to negotiate a new agreement. President Stockett, aware of the action of the Crow's Nest Pass Company in signing a separate agreement in 1909, pointed out that no individual company of the WCOA could enter into a new agreement but rather that it be made by the Association. Minutes, WCOA, March 25, 1911, Clagary.

<sup>44</sup> On February 22, the Crow's Nest Pass Company was reaccepted in the WCOA at an Executive Committee meeting held on that date at Blairmore, Minutes, WCOA, February 22, 1911, Blairmore.





be included. The miners in turn refused this proposal.<sup>45</sup>

The efforts of the Minister of Labour proved to be in vain and on April 1, William Powell ordered a strike in District 18 until an acceptable agreement was reached.<sup>46</sup> The strike involved some 6000 workers directly and numerous others indirectly. On April 13, the operators applied for a Board of Conciliation under the IDI Act, and the Minister of Labour acted immediately. A.J. Carter was appointed to represent the UMW; Colin MacLeod represented the operators; and Rev. Dr. Charles W. Gordon of Winnipeg was made chairman.

Hearings of the newly established board began in Lethbridge on April 26, and after meetings in several camps at which both sides in the dispute made submissions, the Board finally adjourned in Banff on July 5 and presented its final report to the Minister of Labour on that date.<sup>47</sup>

The Investigation Board recommended an increase in wages for both inside and outside day miners which amounted to between three and five percent. On the question of the principle of open shop, it suggested that both parties "...frankly come out into the open...and admit to the right of the union to exist and exercise its functions..."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Dominion Minister of Labour Takes Hand in Great Coal Strike," UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 49, April 20, 1911, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Four days prior to the start of the strike on April 1, the Binational Executive Board discussed conditions in District 18. A committee was appointed to visit the district and possibly to hold a conference with the operators. The Executive urged Powell in Calgary to continue negotiations until the representatives of this committee could get to the district and review the situation first hand. Board Member Moran eventually reached Calgary but the earlier communication apparently did not reach Powell and the strike order went out. See "The Mining Situation at a Glance," UMWJ, Vol. 21, No. 48, April 13, 1911, p. 5; Editorial, Ibid., Vol. 22, No. 4, June 8, 1911, p. 4., and "Report of President," UMW Proceedings, as reported in UMWJ, Vol. 22, No. 36, January 18, 1912, p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> For complete text of the report, see LG, Vol. 12, No. 2, Aug. 1911, p. 150-161.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 154.



The Executive of the WCOA gave their conditional acceptance of the majority report on July 24 and agreed to press for settlement of the strike on the basis of the recommendations contained in the Board report. At the same time the issue was presented to the miners for their approval by a referendum vote, and they rejected the Board report as a basis for a district contract.<sup>49</sup>

On the same day the WCOA expressed its approval of the majority report, the Boards of Trade of the Western provinces sent delegates to MacLeod, Alberta, in an attempt to end the strike. This conference emphasized the paralysis of industry throughout the West as a consequence of the strike, and the delegates reported to the Federal government that a severe coal famine was inevitable unless the strike was terminated.<sup>50</sup>

In response to this plea and aware of the possibility of a prolonged strike, the Federal cabinet passed an Order-In-Council authorizing the remission of coal duties on bituminous coal imported into Western Canada. The order was to take effect on August 7 and was to continue for such period as the domestic mines failed to produce sufficient amounts to meet the public's requirements.<sup>51</sup>

By October, the strike had caused a severe shortage of domestic coal even with the remission of the coal duties. In Saskatchewan, a government report noted that at least 200,000 additional tons were required in addition to existing stocks, of which local mines could produce no more than one-third. On October 25, the Honourable Robert Rogers, Minister of the Interior, arrived in Calgary and offered his services to arrive at a

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<sup>49</sup> LG, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 1911, p. 249.

<sup>50</sup> LG, Vol. 12, No. 6, December 1911, p. 543.

<sup>51</sup> LG, Vol. 12, No. 2, August 1911, pp. 169-170.



settlement. By this time both parties realized that the importing of American bituminous was to their mutual disadvantage, and they showed signs of reaching a settlement after almost 30 weeks of disagreement.<sup>52</sup>

Negotiations resumed with Mr. Rogers acting as a mediator, and on November 13, a settlement was reached on all clauses of a district agreement. The new contract, running for a four year period and based on the Gordon report, established a uniform wage scale applicable to all mines of the WCOA, provided for grievance procedures arising during the life of the agreement, and added a new discrimination clause and modified open shop. The operators agreed to accept all details of the check-off including union dues.<sup>53</sup>

On November 17, the contract received immediate ratification by a referendum vote of the miners throughout District 18, and the Federal Cabinet rescinded the remission of coal duties from the United States on November 20, 1911.<sup>54</sup> The longest and costliest strike in the history of District 18 was finally over.

The contract reached in November was important for several reasons. Firstly, the agreement included a clause for an independent arbitrator to preside over a committee established by the union and management, which in fact, meant he alone was to settle two conflicting opinions. This clause proved much more successful than the pit committee clause of the

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<sup>52</sup> It was estimated that imports of American bituminous entering Western Canada amounted to one million tons between August 7 and the termination of the strike on November 20.

<sup>53</sup> For the exact terms of the contract, see "Text of Agreement," LG, Vol. 12, No. 64, December 1911, pp. 544-564.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 564.





1907 agreement and the two party clause in the 1909 agreement.<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, the contract was to run for a four year period, the longest agreement in the District's history. The length of this contract, together with the improved functioning of the new arbitration clause, resulted in only minor work stoppages in an industry that had been plagued for a decade with labour strife.<sup>56</sup>

Thirdly, the 1911 strike had shown both sides in the dispute that the federal government would not tolerate a repeat of the prolonged Lethbridge strike without allowing for importation of American coal. By allowing the imports of American bituminous, the government was hurting the disputants with only minimal disturbance to the general public.

Fourthly, the 1911 strike left both the industry and the United Mine Workers in a secure position in Western Canada. The Gordon report had revealed that the well-manged and efficient mines were capable of making a satisfactory profit, and that the UMW demands for better wages and working conditions did not prevent the mines from staying solvent.<sup>57</sup>

For the UMW, it had won an agreement acceptable to the rank and file workers, and was on a par with the contracts gained in Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed discussion on this point, see Armstrong, et. al., op. cit., pp. 34-35.

<sup>56</sup> For a table of the proceedings in District 18 under the IDI Act of 1907 to the agreement in 1911, see LG, Vol. 12, No. 11, May 1912, pp. 1056-1061.

<sup>57</sup> Gordon Report, op. cit., pp. 156-157. At a meeting of the Association held on July 19, 1911, the members drafted a letter to J.A. Acland, Deputy Minister of Labour, protesting this point, noting that two-thirds of the member companies had operated at a loss for the previous two years. See Minutes, WCOA, July 19, 1911.

<sup>58</sup> The strikes in these fields, as well as in Nova Scotia and District 18, had caused serious drain on the UMW treasury to the point almost of depletion. This may have accounted for the contract running for four years instead of the two year period as existing previously. For strike assistance from the Binational to District 18, see Appendix.



To a very large degree, the success of the United Mine Workers in its first decade was owing to strong leadership in the District organization and to the adherence of the principles of industrial unionism, and thereby gaining the acceptance and recognition by the employers in the Western Coal Operators' Association. The difficulty faced by the union in continuing this practice in the next decade was its greatest challenge and the ultimate test of its success or failure.



Chapter VI  
THE WAR YEARS AND GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION 1914-1918

Introduction

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe in the late summer of 1914 received only secondary attention among the labour classes in Western Canada. Unemployment was extremely high even before the war started and most people felt preoccupied with their own problems. For the unemployed, the war was a means of gaining employment and getting back on a payroll. The first real effect on the labour force, however, was a loss of European markets for exports.

In District 18, the miners and operators had several months left on a four year contract signed on November 17, 1911. District officials had generally abided by the terms of the contract, although many miners worked less than half of each year. On Vancouver Island, miners had assembled their forces and organized District 28 on December 5, 1911, with a membership of some fifteen hundred men.

Like most Canadians, the miners and the operators had little idea about what the war would mean or what heavy toll it would take. With the call to arms in September, a number of the miners in both District 18 and District 28 enlisted.<sup>1</sup> Most of the volunteers were of British, French and Belgian stock, although some men were of other nationalities. A few towns formed their own militia units, including the 192nd Battalion at Frank and the 107th East Kootenay Regiment in Fernie. Generally speaking, however, the war was rather remote and unknown, and for union officials, their real concern was to obtain the best contracts possible if the war

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<sup>1</sup> It would seem that in most cases, it was less a case of patriotism and more the severe unemployment that prompted many of the early recruits. See Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 25, No. 36, January 14, 1915, p. 10.



meant increased production.

Renegotiation of the 1911 Contract. Shortly after the war broke out, the Federal Minister of Labour, T.W. Crothers, inquired into the possibility of renegotiating a contract in District 18 to avoid a prolonged walkout similar to that in 1911. In late August, a pit head strike had started in Hillcrest, but lasted only a day. The Minister feared that such unrest during the fall would lead to difficult bargaining in January and February before the March 31 deadline. Accordingly, on October 29, Crothers addressed the following letter to Mr. W.F. McNeill, Commissioner of the Western Coal Operators' Association, and sent a similar text to John Smith, President of District 18:<sup>2</sup>

Ottawa, October 29, 1914

Dear Mr. McNeill:

As the agreement between the Western Coal Operators' Association and the United Mine Workers of America will expire on the 31st of March next, I have thought that I might render some assistance in securing, before such expiration, a new agreement. I have talked the matter over with Senator Lougheed of Calgary, and I think it would be well for you to call on him some time during the week commencing the 9th prox., when he expects to be in Calgary, and discuss the matter with him.

I have also asked Mr. Smith, President of District 18, to have an interview with Senator Lougheed.

I shall be glad to do anything in my power to assist the parties in reaching a satisfactory working agreement for the future.

With kind regards

Faithfully,

T.W. Crothers.

Notwithstanding the Minister's attempts to start negotiations immediately, the operators and the union did not organize a scale committee until March 2.<sup>3</sup> The operators favoured another four year contract with

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Minutes, Western Coal Operators' Association, Executive Meeting, November 3rd, 1914, Frank, Alberta.

<sup>3</sup> The agreement of 1911 provided that "the parties hereto will meet in conference thirty days prior to the expiration of this agreement to discuss the renewal thereof." See Chapter V, supra.





terms similar to the 1911 agreement. The United Mine Workers, on the other hand, had taken the position at the district convention to oppose another four year pact, and they tried to bargain for a one year only agreement.<sup>4</sup>

After two weeks of negotiations, the scale committee representing the two parties reached the basis of an agreement. The committee worked on the principle that owing to conditions imposed by the war, there should be no increase in the cost of production to the operators, and no decrease in the earning power of the miners.<sup>5</sup> In order to get favourable wage conditions, the miners were forced to agree to a penalty clause for any stoppage of work. Proposed by Lewis Stockett, the penalty clause meant that for any lockout of pit head strike, the employees would be fined at the rate of one dollar per day. Even though other Districts had similar clauses,<sup>6</sup> District 18 officials strenuously opposed its inclusion in the new agreement.

However, because the coal trade was so depressed, and unemployment so widespread, with most miners working less than an average of half time during the previous six months, the union had considerably less bargaining power than usual. On March 29, the new contract was approved by a large majority of the miners in a referendum vote. Miners at two of the mines did not endorse the agreement immediately, but there was no work stoppage.

Terms of the agreement were similar to the previous contract. The miners failed to get the ten percent wage increase, although the contract

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<sup>4</sup> "Twelfth Annual Convention of District 18," LG, Vol. 15, No. 9, March 1915, p. 1083. District Secretary A.J. Carter reported that the District membership had fallen from 5608 to 4976 in the previous twelve months because of the abandonment of certain mines.

<sup>5</sup> "The District 18 Agreement," UMWJ, Vol. 25, No. 48, April 8, 1915, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Bloch, Labour Agreements in Coal Mines, pp. 294-297.



was in effect for only two years and terminated on March 31, 1917. The contract included a provision for settlement of any disputes during the life of the agreement by a six man committee, composed of the Commissioner of the WCOA, the General Manager of the mine where the dispute arose, and another individual, all representing the operators, and the President or Secretary of the particular local, the President and a District officer for the miners. If this committee reached a decision, it was to be binding on both parties. Otherwise, the matter was referred to a committee composed of the President of the District, the Commissioner of the WCOA, and an independent chairman selected mutually, or failing agreement, by the federal Minister of Labour.<sup>7</sup>

In almost every other respect, the new contract was identical to the 1911 pact.<sup>8</sup> It was the first time in the history of District 18 that work had begun within the framework of a new agreement with no cessation of work or a prolonged strike.

Agreement on Vancouver Island. After the protracted coal strikes on Vancouver Island in 1903, the Western Federation of Miners retired from the coal fields and the miners remained unaffiliated with a Binational Union. The only exception was the local at Nanaimo<sup>9</sup> which joined the United Mine Workers, District 18, as local union 66. Despite the sporadic efforts of the UMW organizers at that local, there was no con-

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<sup>7</sup> "Western Coal Miners Agreement," LG, Vol. 15, No. 10, April 1915, p.1195. The three man committee had been the conciliation procedure under the old contract.

<sup>8</sup> For terms of the new agreement, see ibid., pp. 1196-1202.

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 16, No. 18, September 7, 1905, p. 4. See also Chapter III, supra.



certed attempt to organize other mines on Vancouver Island.<sup>10</sup>

This endeavour finally took place in the fall of 1911, when a committee of the miners, led by George Pettigrew, was selected to wire the Presidents of the Western Federation of Miners and the United Mine Workers to seek membership.<sup>11</sup> The WFM advised the men to seek the help of the UMW. UMW President John White advised the men to start organizing themselves. Pettigrew formed a local union at Ladysmith called the Canadian Federation of Miners, and within weeks, other locals were established at South Wellington and Nomaine in Cumberland. As a result of repeated petitions to the Binational, White sent District Board Members O'Fallon and Frank Farrington to make a complete report on the Vancouver Island situation. Their report led to the arrival of two national organizers, Britten and Inne, who reached the Island in September and began chartering locals under the auspices of the United Mine Workers.

Starting with a membership of only 55 at Ladysmith, the new locals in December 1911 formed District 28, and had 1142 miners by May of 1912 and 2199 in September.<sup>12</sup> By January of 1912, new locals were formed at South Wellington, No. 872, and Nanaimo, No. 2155, and by January 1914, new locals were established at Nanaimo, No. 2824, and Siontula, No. 2831.

On September 15, 1912 leaking gas was found in the Canadian Collieries No. 2 mine at Extension. George Pettigrew, one of the original organizers of the new District and who served on the gas committee reported the leak to the management. Shortly after, Pettigrew's place of

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<sup>10</sup> C.B. Williams, "Canadian-American Trade Union Relations--A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism," p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> This account of the early activities of the UMW on Vancouver Island and the events leading up to the agreement in 1914 is taken from Williams, loc. cit., and UMWJ, Vol. 22, No. 34, January 4, 1912.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the International Auditors, UMWJ, Vol. 23, No. 41, February 20, 1913 (Supplement), p. unnumbered.





work ran out and he was dismissed and blacklisted. The Extension miners met the following day and formed a committee to see Mr. Lockard, the superintendant, since the gas leakage had been verified by an Inspector from the Department of Mines. Naturally, the miners felt Pettigrew had been discharged because of his union activities. That same night the miners at other collieries decided to stop work. The company closed the mines with the warning that no miner could return to work without signing an individual contract.<sup>13</sup>

The miners attempted to have the provincial government invoke the Coal Mines Regulation Act on the grounds that Pettigrew had been dismissed because of his position on the gas committee.<sup>14</sup> Sir Richard McBride, Premier and Minister of Mines, claimed there could be no prosecution without substantial evidence. The union claimed that the dismissal of Pettigrew proved that only an organized labour force could enforce safety regulations. As a later report observed,

The mine inspectors of the province, after investigation, fully concurred with the findings of the miners, but the management not only discharged the two men who investigated, but blacklisted them; refused them work at any of the other mines they owned, and saw to it that none of the other companies hired them.

Naturally, they proved to the miners that they must have an organization if they hope to work with even the commonest assurance of safety; that without a union, they could not be assured of the protection the law is supposed to guarantee them.<sup>15</sup>

By the end of September, the company had ordered all company houses vacated, and with the help of non-union labour, management at Cumberland reopened the mines on October 11. Collieries at Ladysmith started work in January 1913. In November, George Pettigrew succeeded in securing

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<sup>13</sup> "Strike at Ladysmith," LG, Vol. 13, No. 4, October 1912, p. 400.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, p. 206.

<sup>15</sup> "A Case in Point," UMWJ, Vol. 23, No. 47, April 3, 1913, p. 4.



financial backing for the striking miners at Cumberland and Ladysmith. By this time, however, the company had succeeded in bringing in more non-union help through the efforts of a Mr. Frank Sawford.<sup>16</sup>

The strike spread to the other mines of Vancouver Island in May 1913 after Binational Board member Frank Farrington instructed District 28 President Robert Foster to leave only enough men working to protect the mine property.<sup>17</sup> The Department of Labour in Ottawa sent Mr. J.D. McNiven, a fair wage officer of the Department, to meet both parties in an attempt to start conciliation through the IDI Act of 1907, but no agreement was reached.<sup>18</sup>

The federal Minister of Labour, T.W. Crothers, arrived at the strike scene during July but he was unable to persuade the disputants to make an acceptable agreement. Mr. Samuel Price of St. Thomas, Ontario was appointed a Royal Commissioner to investigate the strike, and began hearings in July.

However, in August, as the bitterness between the striking union men and the non-union workers reached a breaking point, riots broke out in Extension at the hotel where the strikebreakers were living. The rioting

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<sup>16</sup> "UMWA to Finance Island Miners," UMWJ, Vol. 23, No. 26, November 7, 1912 p. 8. Strike aid amounted to four dollars per week for single men, six dollars for married men plus one dollar for each child. Assistance was extended to both union and non-union men.

<sup>17</sup> "Strike Extended on Vancouver Island," UMWJ, Vol. 23, No. 52, May 8, 1913, p.2. The instructions given to Foster by letter are printed in this report. Farrington was given authority for running the strike by President White. For his early observations on the strike situation, see "The Situation on Vancouver Island," UMWJ, Vol. 23, No. 46, March 27, 1913, pp. 1,6.

<sup>18</sup> "Strike at Nanaimo," LG, Vol.13, No. 12, June 1913, p. 1415. According to one report, the company did not want an early settlement. The mines at Extension where the strikes started, formerly belonged to the Dunsmuir family, and were sold in 1911 for \$11 million to MacKenzie and Mann, two American Railway promoters. The mines were transferred to Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir), Ltd. and a stock issue floated for twenty-five million. In order not to prejudice a bond issue for railway construction on the Canadian Northern, the company wanted the strike continued to cover up its inability to pay dividends on the watered colliery stock. Philips, No Power Greater, p. 56.



and pilgling spread to South Wellington and other strike scenes. The situation got so out of hand that the Attorney-General was forced to call in the militia to occupy the towns. In all, 213 strikers were arrested and charges were laid against 203 men.<sup>19</sup>

The only peaceful area was the Vancouver-Nanaimo Coal Mining Company colliery, one of the smallest mines on the Island, where on August 18 an agreement was reached which recognized the union but called for wages and working conditions similar to those before the strike was called.<sup>20</sup>

To help defend the miners, various labour groups, including the UMW, the British Columbia Federation of Labour, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Congress, and the International Workers of the World, formed the Miners' Federation League.<sup>21</sup> In October Frank Farrington supported the attempt made by the Trades and Labour Congress to appoint a Board of Conciliation under the IDI Act. Even when the Deputy Minister of Labour, C.F. Acland, arrived at the strike scene, the companies refused to begin negotiations.<sup>22</sup>

In January, a convention of all unions in British Columbia, with some fourteen thousand men from almost every industry represented, discussed the issue of a general strike in support of the miners. However, the idea was turned down despite the considerable support given it. The main reason was that there was little hope of any success. The presence of the militia and troops, together with the arrests of key UMW leaders,

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<sup>19</sup> For more complete details on the Vancouver Island Strike, see Allan John Wargo, "The Great Coal Strike, The Vancouver Island Coal Miners' Strike, 1912-1914" (B.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, September 1962); Report of Royal Commission on Coal Mining Disputes on Vancouver Island (Samuel Price Commissioner), and Williams, pp. 199-222.

<sup>20</sup> For text of the agreement, see LG, Vol. 14, No. 3, September 1913, pp. 305-312. Robert Foster and Frank Farrington signed for the miners. The contract was to run for two years.

<sup>21</sup> Philips, p. 60.

<sup>22</sup> LG, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 1914, p. 380.





had already made the strike somewhat less effective. Moreover, depressed economic conditions both in Canada and the United States meant that the Binational could not support the miners indefinitely.<sup>23</sup>

In March, 1914 the Western Fuel Company made an agreement with its striking employees which was to run until October 1916. The men were to receive a ten percent wage increase on those existing at the mines on May 1.<sup>24</sup>

The following month, Premier McBride called a number of company representatives together in an attempt to end the strike at the other collieries. According to a proposal sent to Frank Farrington from the Premier, dated June 15, 1914, the miners were to be allowed to join the UMW if they so desired. The companies refused to grant the union any recognition, although they ostensibly agreed not to discriminate against any of the men because of their affiliation with the UMW.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, the Binational notified the district that additional strike assistance would not be forthcoming.<sup>26</sup> Without further strike aid the miners had little choice but to give in. Moreover, the outbreak of war in early August meant that their return to work was inevitable. Accordingly, on August 19, the men voted to end the strike and resume operations.<sup>27</sup> The strike had lasted only one month short of two full years.

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<sup>23</sup> Total strike assistance given to District 28 miners from 1912-1914 amounted to \$1,172,500. In all the UMW paid out \$1,621,942.67 for strike aid in 1913, and \$2,910,081.50 in 1914. In early November, a referendum of all miners in the UMW voted to continue the payment of 50 cents per month assessment in support of the striking miners of British Columbia and in Colorado. The vote was 129,489 in favour, 17,215 against. UMWJ, Vol. 14, No. 27, November 13, 1913, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> LG, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 1914, p. 380.

<sup>25</sup> McBride's proposal to Farrington is quoted in Wargo, p. 143.

<sup>26</sup> LG, Vol. 15, No. 4, August 1914, p. 306.

<sup>27</sup> For a summary of the events leading up to the miners' referendum to end the strike, see "Coal Miners on Vancouver Island," LG, Vol. 15, No. 8, February 1915, pp. 931-932.





The strike had cost hundreds of thousands of lost hours, and over a million dollars in strike aid. The union claimed the settlement met most of its demands, but the contract had hardly been signed when the company began to start blacklisting the union leaders and discrimination continued without challenge.<sup>28</sup>

At the annual convention of the Trades and Labour Congress, held in St. John, New Brunswick, District 28 President Robert Foster and Board Member Frank Farrington reported on the strike on Vancouver Island. They lobbied for a passage of a resolution condemning the Minister of Labour for failing to use the powers of his office in an impartial manner to settle the strike. The motion carried.<sup>29</sup>

In his own defense, Crothers replied that all the strikes except those at the mines owned by Canadian Collieries had been called by Farrington in violation of the IDI Act and in breach of existing agreements. However, the Minister failed to mention the charges that the Crown Prosecutor and the Attorney-General had overacted in the charges laid to the striking miners.<sup>30</sup>

Other resolutions passed by the Congress involved particular aspects of the strike. They included motions on the right of the miners to picket during the strike, and instructed the Executive Council to investigate the charges: the prohibition of employment of Asiatics underground, and the securing of the release of Joseph Angelos, a UMW organizer who was sentenced to a term of four years on a charge growing out of the strike. He

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<sup>28</sup> Philips, p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> "Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress," LG, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1914, p. 485.

<sup>30</sup> For details of the trails following the August riots, see Wargo, pp. 116ff.



was released on September 25, 1914 and subsequently deported to the United States.

The Beginnings of Labour Unrest Within the Ranks of District 18: The Case of the War Bonus Clause. By the spring of 1916, labour unrest had begun to show signs of radicalism. Despite the fact that the existing contract was signed without any work stoppage, the union had not succeeded in getting an increase in wages. What made the job of the District officials so difficult was that on the one hand there was widespread unemployment, and on the other, increases in the cost of living virtually wiped out any gains by those who still had jobs.

The first signs of discontent started at the collieries of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, where on May 4, 1916, miners from Coal Creek and Fernie passed a resolution requesting district officers to press for a ten percent wage increase, to be considered as a "war bonus."<sup>31</sup> Shortly after, locals at Michel held a similar meeting and asked management for a wage increase and justified their demands on the increased cost of living. By the end of May, all locals in District 18 except Bankhead sought wage increases, and William Graham, District 18 President, was forced to act. On May 29, he addressed a letter to W.F. McNeill, the Commissioner of the WCOA, and requested a meeting to be arranged with the operators "as speedily as possible," to discuss the wage demands and "other contentious matters."<sup>32</sup>

On June 16, the Union officials met Lewis Stockett and representatives of the operators to present their proposals for a war bonus. They

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<sup>31</sup> LG, Vol. 16, No. 1, July 1916, p. 1334.

<sup>32</sup> Graham to McNeill, quoted in Minutes, WCOA, June 2, 1916, Calgary.



asked for an immediate increase of ten percent on wages, and justified their demands by referring to the rise in the cost of living, the fact that bonuses had been granted in England and parts of the United States, and the shortage of skilled miners.<sup>33</sup>

Conceding the rise in the price level, the operators made a counter proposal of an immediate increase of five percent and a further 2½ percent advance to take effect April 1, 1917 with the understanding that the existing agreement would be extended until the March 31 after the expiration of the war.<sup>34</sup> This proposition was submitted to the miners for a vote, and was rejected on July 10 by a vote of 2172-1227, a majority of 895.<sup>35</sup> The next day, a pithead strike occurred at Coleman which lasted ten days and was settled only when Mr. Fred Harrison of the Department of Labour intervened. The operators refused to even negotiate with the union until the Coleman strike was settled. New strikes broke out at Coal Creek and Lethbridge.

By the end of the month, however, it appeared that the unrest within the union ranks was beyond control of District 18 officials. The miners held a mass meeting at Fernie to discuss a letter addressed to them from the operators and signed by Mr. McNeill, who reiterated the five percent wage increase effective immediately. The companies claimed that there had been no increased profits to grant a ten percent increase from, and that present contracts were made on the basis of the 1915 wage scale.

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<sup>33</sup> The men claimed temporary help employed as drivers were receiving \$3.30 per eight hour shift, while permanent qualified drivers received only \$3.03 per shift.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes, WCOA, June 22, 1916, Calgary. The proposal was submitted to the miners on June 23.

<sup>35</sup> LG, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 1916, pp. 1550-1557.





Moreover, even if the selling price could have been raised, it was argued, the real effect would be a curtailing of the market and a further hardship for the miners.<sup>36</sup>

The District Board wanted time to discuss this communique but the Fernie miners refused to turn out for work the following day, and they did not reach full strength until July 28. In the mean time, Harrison met with the District Executive Board and, pressing for another meeting with the operators, suggested that if no agreement could be made, then the matter should be submitted for arbitration under the IDI Act.

He arranged a joint meeting in Calgary on July 29 but by this time, pit head strikes were spreading throughout the district. District President Graham reported to the operators that while every effort had been made to get the men back to work, all had failed. Obviously aware that Graham was losing control of the union, Stockett wired Binational President John P. White for his personal intervention to end the strikes from Seattle. White answered that he would be available for consultations with the operators and the union from August 1 to 10.<sup>37</sup>

Between July 31 and August 5, serious unrest existed throughout the district. Work stopped again at Fernie and Lethbridge, and new walkouts occurred at Coal Hurst, Nordegg and Michel. With the mediation of Fair Wage Officers McNiven and Harrison, the union and the operators reached a compromise wage scale which provided for increases ranging from five to eight percent. This proposal was submitted to the miners and was approved

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<sup>36</sup> McNeill's letter to the miners is quoted in full in Ibid., pp. 1552-1553.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes, WCOA, July 31, 1916, Calgary.



by a vote of 2078-1394, a majority of 684. The new wage scale went into effect on August 14.<sup>38</sup>

The new wage supplements did not satisfy the miners, however, as increases in the cost of living since the start of the war climbed to the twelve percent mark. Moreover, the price spiral was accompanied by a labour shortage in the fall of 1916. In response to these conditions, the Executive Board of District 18 met on November 11 in Fernie, and submitted the following resolution to the coal operators:<sup>39</sup>

That we demand a War Bonus of 25% to take effect from November 1st. In the event of the Operators not conceding this direct request submitted in writing, we offer as a counterproposition the following, to take effect from same date--November 1st:-- That a committee be formed immediately comprising of 3 representatives of the Western Coal Operators' Association and 3 members from Miners' Organization, together with a representative or representatives of the Dominion Government. Said committee to investigate the increased cost of living, and the War Bonus paid to be commensurate with said increased cost of living ascertained by said committee. Further that a copy of this resolution be wired to Premier Bordon, the Special Committee recently appointed by the Cabinet to investigate the high cost of living and the President and Secretary of the Operators' Association. One of the foregoing propositions must be decided upon by November 25th.

On behalf of the Executive Board,  
Signed: Wm. Graham, President,  
T. Biggs, Vice-President,  
A.J. Carter, Secretary.

The operators refused to grant a 25% wage increase on the grounds that the August agreement fixed the war bonus rate until the expiration of the contract on March 31, 1917. After notifying the union, the operators sent a wire to T.W. Crothers, in which they reviewed the claims

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<sup>38</sup> LG, op. cit., 1554. During the negotiations, pithead strikes occurred at the following mines: Coal Creek--9 days; Michel--6; Galt--7; Coalhurst--3; Chinook--1; Nordegg--1; Drumheller--3. For a comparison of the old and new wage rates, see ibid., pp. 1555-1557.

<sup>39</sup> Minutes, WCOA, November 16, 1916, Calgary.



made by District 18 officers, and added:

...Miners' demands contained in telegram of November 11, 1916 are considered peremptory in tone and altogether arbitrary, a direct violation of agreement, and absolutely impossible to entertain under existing conditions, in view of the fact that the largest proportion of our output has been contracted for based on the wages of existing agreement.

Would suggest that you take some action to impress upon Miners the importance of living up to their agreement, which terminates in four months, and of fulfilling their obligations to the country as a whole at this time, and would further suggest that John P. White, President, United Mine Workers of America, could assist you materially in having Miners respect their written agreements.<sup>40</sup>

The contents of this telegram started a four way bargaining process. The main problem was involving the district union, Binational representatives, the operators, and government officials to settle the miners' claims for better wages and still placate the operators who had fixed contracts calculated on existing wage scales. Lasting for more than six months, these negotiations resulted in proposals and counterproposals, radicalism, and discontent among the workers, and frustrations and anger among the operators. In short, what was at stake was the very basis of written contracts signed between the WCOA and District 18. Basically, each side relied on the contract for its own defense. For the operators, there was the security of relative stability during the life of the agreement, and very importantly, a fixed wage scale on which to calculate their selling prices. For the miners, there was the guarantee that safety regulations and wage scales would be followed, and that the check-off would be deducted to support their union.

What made the present situation even more serious, however, was the bitterness and ill-feeling shown by both the operators and the union towards each other. In part, this was the result of the war time conditions,

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<sup>40</sup> Minutes, WCOA, November 16, 1916, Calgary.





but it was also due in large measure to the insecurity of the District Union itself. The previous four years had seen four different District Presidents, more leaders than in the previous ten years combined. After Frank Sherman resigned in 1909, William Powell succeeded to the Presidency.<sup>41</sup> However, the District Board considered him to be somewhat unstable, and Clem Stubbs was recruited as Vice-President to hold Powell down. Powell was forced to resign and Stubbs was elected President effective May 1, 1912.<sup>42</sup>

Stubbs continued as President for almost two years, but in June of 1913, he resigned when the Vice-President, John O. Jones wanted to run as a Liberal in the Federal constituency of Lethbridge. Stubbs felt that the identification of Jones with a political party would split the ranks of the UMW, and refused to run again.<sup>43</sup> When the War broke out, Stubbs joined the army and went overseas.

When Stubbs resigned, John Smith of Fernie took his place on a temporary basis, but at the District Convention in 1914, he was succeeded by William Graham, the Vice-President. The new Vice-President was Thomas Biggs.<sup>44</sup>

In view of this instability within the union, the Minister of Labour was caught in a dilemma. If he granted an increase to the miners, he would set a precedent for future contracts. If he refused to allow a wage increase, he was faced with a strike and further deterioration among the labour ranks. He indicated his position in a telegram forwarded to

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<sup>41</sup> See Chapter V, supra.

<sup>42</sup> "Notes on Early History of UMWA," Unpublished manuscript, August 16, 1965, located in Glenbow Historical Archives, Calgary, Alberta, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> LG, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 1914, p. 377.





the operators on November 22, 1916.

Ottawa, Nov. 22, 1916

W.F. McNeill.

Private--While reluctant to urge departure from deliberate agreement made last August, as the lesser of two evils is it not expedient that the proposition concerning higher cost of living should be accepted?<sup>45</sup>

Two days later, the operators again reiterated their claim that they could not agree to a further wage increase, but supported the miners' request for a commission. However, they added that "...if the United Mine Workers of America will not adhere to their written agreement, but consider them as scraps of paper, it is useless to make further agreements with them."<sup>46</sup>

Mr. Frederick Harrison, Fair Wage Officer of the Department of Labour, attempted to stall a strike by the miners, but on November 27 the walkout took place. Crothers summoned District President Powell and Binational Board Member David Rees to Ottawa for consultation.

At this meeting the Minister agreed to the appointment of Mr. Harrison as a special investigator into the cost of living dated 1st of July 1916 to 22nd of November.<sup>47</sup>

The operators pressed to have Mr. Harrison's terms of reference broadened to cover all aspects of the wage dispute since they believed he would eventually justify the stand they had taken. The miners, meanwhile, issued an ultimatum that unless Harrison made his report by January 15, the men would cease work at the mines.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Minutes, WCOA, November 24, 1916, MacLeod, Alberta.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> "Wage Changes and Disputes in Coal Mining Industries in Canada," LG, Vol. 16, No. 6, December 1916, pp. 1870-1872.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes, Executive Meeting, WCOA, December 8, 1916, Calgary.



Matters reached a boiling point in January. A brief presented in Ottawa to the Federal Cabinet by the operators on January 5 charged the union with bad faith and breach of contract. Furthermore, they stated that the war emergency and the cost of living issue were simply excuses being used by a foreign union to break a written contract and to increase wages.<sup>49</sup>

A few days later Harrison released his report and indicated that the cost of living had indeed greatly increased. The union waited until the January 15 deadline, and then went out on strike again. Crothers applied pressure on the operators to grant a wage increase of \$1.75 per week, and even intimated that the government might find it necessary to take over the mines.<sup>50</sup>

The operators began preliminary negotiations with the union on January 29, at which time they promised the men a new wage bonus commensurate with the cost of living increases as outlined in Harrison's report. On February 3, the Minister of Labour ordered the new war bonus paid as follows:

Calgary, February 3, 1917

The President and Members  
Western Coal Operators Association.

Gentlemen:

The Dominion Government are advising the Mine Workers that they will receive the sum of \$1.75 per week per man from the 15th day November, 1916 to the 1st day of April, 1917.

The Government will arrange to provide the cash to pay the said \$1.75 per week per man for the period between the 15th day of November, 1916 and the 5th day of February, 1917, collecting same as they can from the Consumers.

The Government desire and instruct you:

1. To operate your mines and to advance the price of your product

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<sup>49</sup> Minutes, WCOA, January 5-12, 1917, Ottawa.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



from February 5th, 1917, a sufficient sum per ton to provide the amount necessary to cover the \$1.75 per week (from 3rd February to April 1st, 1917).

2. To cancel any existing contracts that will interfere with the carrying out of this arrangement.
3. To pay the men the sum of \$1.75 from the proceeds of the advanced price from February 3rd to April 1st, 1917.

Signed: T.W. Crothers,  
Minister of Labour<sup>51</sup>

The operators agreed to the Minister's proposals but asked that the war bonus be given to all persons on the mine payroll, including Mine Managers and Mechanics. The Minister agreed to this extension, provided his representative, Mr. Harrison was given access to company payrolls and time books. When the operators consented the last phase of the war bonus crisis ended. There still remained, however, the problem of negotiation of a new contract before the March 31 deadline.

Negotiations for a New Contract and Appointment of a Director of Coal Operations. In line with the 1915 contract calling for negotiations to start 30 days prior to its expiration, the Scale Committee of the miners and the operators met to work out a renewal agreement on March 5. The miners pressed for a general wage increase of 25 percent on all rates, and an eight hour day for all classes of labour, and a contract to run until August 31, 1918. The operators in turn agreed to offer a 5 percent wage increase on contract and day wages, in addition to the War Bonus of August 14, 1916.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, the companies wanted a special deduction with the check-off collections amounting to 50 cents which would be deposited in a Trust Company as a sign of good will on the part of both sides. According to

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<sup>51</sup> Minutes, WCOA, February 20, 1917, Blairmore, Alberta.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes, WCOA, March 6, 1917, Calgary, Alberta.





this proposal the companies would deposit a similar amount, and the funds would be under the joint control of the Treasurer of the union and of the WCOA. Orders drawn under the clause "Stoppage of Work" would be paid from this trust fund.<sup>53</sup>

Negotiations dragged on throughout the month, but as the deadline approached, there was still no agreement. When the contract expired, the miners waited one day, and then walked out on strike at all mines in District 18. Even as the strike was in progress, both sides refused to grant any major concessions from their original stand.

On April 24, the scale committee reached a tentative agreement, according to which the War Bonus would be added to the base wage rate. According to sentiments expressed among the operators, as expressed subsequently in the Minutes of May 8, the agreement was voted down in a general referendum on account of three factors: 1) the miners at Fernie sent a telegram to the other district locals stating their intention to vote "no"; 2) there was internal friction among the district officers; 3) there had been misrepresentation of the "penalty clause" by officers wanting it completely abolished.<sup>54</sup>

On May 10, District 18 officials convened a special meeting to discuss the contract negotiations. A message was sent to Binational President John White in Indianapolis seeking his advice. White immediately ordered the men to go back to work pending a settlement, and notified the Minister of Labour of his order to District 18. When the men still refused to resume operations White sent a second order on May 25 and ap-

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Minutes, WCOA, May 8, 1917, Calgary.



pointed a deputation to proceed to Calgary.<sup>55</sup>

Crothers sent Harrison, the Fair Wage Officer, to ask what stand the operators would take in negotiations directly with President White. The operators answered that renewed negotiations were useless, adding "if the men will not accept what their own representatives and the representatives of the President of their Union consider fair and reasonable, we urge that the Government immediately take effective action to put the mines in operation."<sup>56</sup>

As the strike continued, however, conditions worsened in other industrial areas. The smelters in British Columbia were at a virtual standstill because their supplies of coke were used up. Many of the railway companies were getting short of coal and certain manufacturing companies also felt the shortage. As a result the Cabinet appointed Mr. C.A. Magrath as Fuel Controller, who immediately announced that the critical shortage in Western Canada of anthracite and bituminous coal would force the Government to seek supplies outside of Canada.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of May, Mr. Crothers sent R.F. Green, a member of Parliament, to seek an adjustment in view of the crisis. Green recommended an agreement based on an advance of 22½ percent on the rates which expired March 31, 1917 regardless of the war bonus applied during its existence. Moreover, Green recommended a commission representing both operators and union to sit every four months to adjust wages according to changes in the cost of living.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Minutes, WCOA, May 26, 1917, Calgary.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes, WCOA, May 26, 1917, Calgary

<sup>57</sup> LG, Vol. 16, No. 12, June 1917, p. 476.

<sup>58</sup> LG, Vol. 17, No. 8, August 1917, p. 614.



To these proposals, the union stated that the men stop striking for a flat 30 percent increase and an eight hour day. The operators in turn demanded that no increase be granted which was greater than the proportionate advances given in Wyoming and Montana, lest the Canadian companies be put at a competitive disadvantage.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, the Government appointed Mr. W.H. Armstrong of Vancouver as Director of Coal Operations for Western Canada. According to The Labour Gazette, he was required to "make inquiries respecting wages and hours of labour, and labour conditions generally, and other matters affecting the cost of production and coke, and the resumption of such products during the war and for three months after the conclusion of the peace."<sup>60</sup>

On June 27, Armstrong issued a memorandum from Calgary with the following conditions:<sup>61</sup>

1) The Tentative Agreement of March 1917 was to apply, with a 7½ percent increase in the wage schedule;

2) The "Stoppage of Work" and the Deductions Clauses were to be deleted;

3) These conditions and rates were to be effective from April 1, 1917 to April 1, 1919;

4) A commission representing the Government, the Union, and the Operators were to meet every four months, if requested by any one party, to adjust the wage schedule in line with the cost of living;

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<sup>59</sup> For the exact memoranda exchanged between Mr. Green and the operators, see Minutes, WCOA, June 6,9,13,15, and 16, 1917, Calgary.

<sup>60</sup> LG, Vol. 17, No. 7, July 1917, p. 506.

<sup>61</sup> Minutes, WCOA, June 27, 1917, Calgary; the full text of Mr. Armstrong's letter is quoted.





5) Any disputes were to be decided by the Director of Coal Operations.

That same day, the operators agreed to the Director's conditions, and after the miners agreed by a referendum vote, work resumed at the mines on July 3. During July, a strike took place in the Drumheller fields which operated outside the District 18 agreement. A settlement was soon affected on the basis of the contract signed throughout District 18.<sup>62</sup>

During the remainder of 1917 and throughout 1918, the Commission<sup>63</sup> appointed to study changes in the cost of living made several adjustments to the wage schedule. Grievances, however, continued to take place at almost every local throughout the District, and the Director was required to arbitrate each case separately. For the most part, the disputes arose over the particular wage classification of one or more miners.<sup>64</sup>

The first adjustment in the wage scale covered the period from April 1, 1917 to August 1, 1917, which indicated a rise of 20 cents per day in the cost of living.<sup>65</sup> A second report covering the period to December 31, 1917 brought an additional advance of .836 cents per week, or 14 cents per day. On this occasion, Mr. McNeill issued a minority report suggesting the increase was only .0951 cents per day, but he was overruled by the Coal Director.<sup>66</sup>

Further increases were granted on April 1, 1918 amounting to 20 cents and on August 1, 1918 twenty-five cents. The last increase granted

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<sup>62</sup> LG, Vol. 17, No. 8, August 1917, pp. 613-614. For the text of the agreement, the the wage schedule, see ibid., pp. 616-617.

<sup>63</sup> The committee consisted of Frederick Harrison, Fair Wage Officer of the Department of Labour, W.F. McNeill, Commissioner of the WCOA, and Frank Wheatley, representing District 18.

<sup>64</sup> The number of such disputes from 1914-1920 were as follows: 1914--1; 1915--2; 1916--6; 1917--14; 1918--27; 1919--10; 1920--26.

<sup>65</sup> LG, Vol. 17, No. 12, December 1917, p. 987.

<sup>66</sup> LG, Vol. 18, No. 2, February 1918, p. 142.





by the Coal Director was the the period August 1 to November 30, amounting to 13 cents.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the work stoppages over minor points, coal production at the mines throughout District 18 increased to its highest level during the war.<sup>68</sup>

In all, the Director settled some 350 disputes of a local nature, and increased the wage scale of the miners by 58 cents during 1918.<sup>69</sup> Just how successful the Director was, however, in settling disputes was another matter. Almost every decision Armstrong made concerning wages and work disputes went in favour of the miners, when the economy was undergoing an increase in the price level. The real test for the Director would come during a period of falling prices and deflation.

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<sup>67</sup> LG, Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1919, pp. 64-69.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix for production statistics in Alberta and British Columbia.

<sup>69</sup> For details of the major disputes settled by the Director, see LG, Vol. 18, No. 3, March 1918, p. 225; Vol. 18, No. 6, June 1918, p. 439; Vol. 18 No. 8, August 1918, pp. 635-636; Vol. 18, No. 9, September 1918, p. 753; Vol. 18, No. 11, November 1918, p. 1004.



### PART III 1919-1925

#### REBELLION AND RADICALISM IN UNIONISM AND BREAKUP OF DISTRICT 18

##### Chapter VII

##### The Turn to Radical Socialism in Union Ranks

Introduction. The cessation of hostilities in November 1918 served to aggravate the labour unrest which had manifested itself in so many areas throughout the war. This labour unrest took many forms and was not limited to District 18 or even North America. Of immediate concern to labour ranks at the beginning of 1919, however, was the influx of workers returning from the front lines of Europe, and the demand for ending war time control of prices, wages, and other government emergency measures.

The war years, it has been seen,<sup>1</sup> had witnessed widespread dissatisfaction within the ranks of District 18, even to the point where rank and file workers refused to obey the District officers. The miners had won their demands for a war bonus and increased cost of living allowances, mainly because of the intervention of the Director of Coal operations, W.H. Armstrong. By early 1919 this rank and file unrest took another turn which led to complete rebellion in District 18 and, eventually, the revocation of the charter by Binational President John L. Lewis.

The actual causes of this rebellion must be considered in the wider context of labour problems in Canada originating during the war. In Canada, the first battleground was the convention of the Trades

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter VI.



and Labour Congress held in Quebec City in 1918. A small group of Western leaders, all well known in Canadian labour circles, attempted to bring about a reorganization of Canadian labour movement "by industry instead of by craft."<sup>2</sup> Eight resolutions, all virtually identical in content and substance, were introduced at the TLC by Western labour councils which intended to bring about this reorganization, but all were defeated.

The Western delegates, recognizing the great difficulty facing the West from war reconstruction and suspicious of the more conservative East,<sup>3</sup> decided that the attitude and the methods of the TLC were out of date. Accordingly the Western representatives at the Quebec convention met together and voted to hold a conference of representatives of all Western labour bodies before the next convention of the TLC. The group organized a committee headed by David Rees, vice-president of the TLC and member of the Binational Executive Board of the UMW, District 18, to handle the details of a conference, which would be held in Calgary on March 13, 1919.

It is significant to point out that there was nothing particularly successionist or radical about this movement. The Western delegates simply felt that the TLC was not representative of Canadian labour, and that it made no attempt to understand the Western viewpoint, particularly as all conventions were held in the East. Western representatives at past Congresses had made repeated representations for basic changes in the policies and organization of the TLC but were always voted down by Eastern delegates, since Western labour bodies

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<sup>2</sup>Harold A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto: MacMillan, 1947), p.305.

<sup>3</sup>Western delegates to the Congress attempted to show that the Western provinces had contributed more to the war effort in terms of the number of men enlisted in proportion to the total population.





could not afford to send enough delegates the long distance to match the Ontario bodies.<sup>4</sup>

Less than a month before the Calgary meeting, the UMW held its sixteenth convention in District 18, at which the delegates voted in favour of industrial unionism and the end of the contract system of mining.<sup>5</sup> A few weeks previous, the Alberta Federation of Labour elected as president Frank Wheatley, a miner from Bankhead who was described as "an avowed radical".<sup>6</sup> The delegates passed a resolution condemning the sending of Canadian troops to Russia and supported a resolution favouring industrial unionism.<sup>7</sup>

Some 250 delegates<sup>8</sup> from all Western provinces and parts of Ontario met in Calgary, and the more radical stands taken by specific labour bodies prior to the Calgary meeting soon became evident, despite the promise of moderation given in Quebec City. The meeting proclaimed a doctrine of revolutionary unionism similar to the radical Industrial Workers of the World and proposed a new organization based on industrial lines to be called the One Big Union.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps detecting the militant viewpoint of the assembled delegates, Chairman David Rees, before vacating the chair to R.J. Tallon, Vice-President of the Calgary Trades and Labour Council, reviewed the

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<sup>4</sup>Stuart Jamieson, Industrial Relations in Canada (Toronto: MacMillan, 1957), pp. 40-41

<sup>5</sup>"District 18 and the One Big Union," Canadian Annual Review, 1919, p.500.

<sup>6</sup>"Alberta Federation of Labour Endorses Industrial Unionism," District Ledger, Vol. 1, No. 22, January 9, 1919, p.1.

<sup>7</sup>This resolution arose out of protests made at a convention held in Winnipeg on December 22 called by the TLC.

<sup>8</sup>Actually there were 237 accredited delegates; 85 from British Columbia, 89 from Alberta, 19 from Saskatchewan, 46 from Manitoba. "Western Interprovincial Labour Conference and the One Big Union," LG, Vol. 19, No. 4, April 1919, pp. 458-459

<sup>9</sup>The name was adopted from a similar organization in Australia. See "The One Big Union in Canada," Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, J. Castell Hopkins, ed., 1920, pp. 456ff.



events at Quebec City which had led to the Calgary convention. "The child has been created," he declared, "it will not be to hold the committee responsible for the child's actions."<sup>10</sup>

The British Columbia delegation was the most radical of the groups attending the Calgary meeting, a fact which reflected the amount of work it had done between the Quebec meeting in September and the Calgary meeting in March. A number of resolutions were proposed including a call for a general strike on June 1 for a six hour day, five day week (Resolution 6); immediate withdrawal of all Allied troops from Russia (Resolution 8); and freedom of speech, press, and assembly and the release of all political prisoners (Resolution 4).<sup>11</sup>

Another resolution was submitted by J. Kavanagh, a representative of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council and chairman of the resolutions committee, as a substitute for any resolutions dealing with industrial unionism:

Resolved that this convention recommend to its affiliated memberships the severences of their affiliation with their international organizations and that steps be taken to form an industrial organization of all workers, and be it further resolved that a circular letter outlining a probable plan of organization be sent out to the various organizations and that a referendum on the question be taken at the same time and that the question be submitted to the entire Canadian membership, ballot returns to be segregated from Port Arthur as the dividing line between East and West.<sup>12</sup>

According to the terms of the referendum, the plan would be considered passed if a majority of organizations in the vital trades (transportation, metal trades and mines) voted in favour; members of locals failing to vote were to be counted as "affirmative"; moreover, the drafting of the referendum questions was to be left to the central

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<sup>10</sup>"OBU Proposed," DL, Vol. 1, No. 32, March 1919, p.1.

<sup>11</sup>Logan, op. cit., pp. 308-309

<sup>12</sup>"OBU Proposed", DL, op. cit.



committee, to be selected irrespective of geographical location.<sup>13</sup>

The committee decided to hold the referendum on June 1 to establish a six hour day, as noted already, and preparations were made to distribute ballots on the question of forming the new organization.<sup>14</sup> Returns were to be filed by May 15.

UMW Participation in the OBU Movement. Discontent in the ranks of mineworkers of District 18 was evident in the sympathetic reception given to the One Big Union movement, but there were several signs of rebellion and possible radicalism several months before the Calgary conference. Mention has already been made of the dissatisfaction of the rank and file workers during the latter stages of the war.

At the annual convention of the District in April 1918, a dispute arose over the wage agreement and the war bonus clauses. Board Members David Rees, Andrew Steele, and Neal Ferry spent considerable time persuading the delegates that the Binational was not against any increases in the wage scale which would keep pace with the cost of living. In the previous months this caused considerable resentment against the UMW.<sup>15</sup>

Again the following year the District convention witnessed rank and file discontent with the international. In the district election of 1919, David Rees lost the presidency to P.M. Christophers and Edward Browne became Secretary Treasurer.<sup>16</sup> The question of retaining

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<sup>13</sup>Logan, p. 310.

<sup>14</sup>The referendum consisted of two questions: "Are you in favour of severing your connection with the present international unions?" "Are you in favour of making a stand for a six hour day and a five day week after June 1?" DL, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup>Correspondence, UMWJ, Vol. 28, No. 50, April 11, 1918, p. 10.





the contract system of mining showed many miners in favour of its abolition. Representatives of the Binational Board stated that if a resolution on abolition of contracts passed, the District would be unable to count on financial or other support from the Binational Union. A compromise was reached by passing a resolution putting the district on record as opposed to the principle of the contract system. However, notwithstanding the threat of a withdrawal of financial support, there remained a strong sentiment in the minds of some delegates in favour of withdrawing affiliation from the UMWA and organizing a self-contained and independent Canadian organization.<sup>17</sup>

The miners at this same convention decided to request an extension of the existing contract with the WCOA, which provided for negotiations for a new agreement to begin within thirty days of a declaration of peace.<sup>18</sup> The miners felt that they were in no position to negotiate until the binational issued a policy statement on reconstruction at a special convention to be held in Indianapolis on March 18. Moreover, the operators gave notice that they would refuse to extend the contract for an indefinite period. When the miners stated they would begin negotiations after the meeting in Indianapolis, the Coal Director issued Order No. 116 outlining the terms of the extension, indicating no change in working conditions stipulated by the Tentative Agreement, and no suspension of work during negotiations for a new contract.<sup>19</sup>

Negotiations for the new contract finally got underway on April 9. However, the first consideration was not a new contract but Order No. 123 issued by Mr. Armstrong to conform to the eight hour work law coming into

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<sup>17</sup>"Annual Convention of District No. 18 UMW," Western Canada Coal Review, Vol. 1, No. 8, March 1919, p.38. hereinafter WCCR.

<sup>18</sup>The request was made to the Director of Coal Operations in a letter dated February 27. See Minutes, WCOA, February 28, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>19</sup>LG, Vol. 19, No. 4, April 1919, p. 472.





effect in British Columbia. According to this order, the miners were to work one hour less than the nine hours outlined in the Tentative Agreement, and the wages were to be adjusted accordingly. The miners refused to accept the change and demanded that Armstrong withdraw the order.<sup>20</sup>

Several meetings were held between the District officers and the Operators with Mr. Armstrong present. Finally on April 15, the operators agreed to support the Coal Director for paying nine hours pay for eight hours work. For men working more than nine hours work, their pay was reduced to provide even rates in the District.<sup>21</sup> Armstrong then issued Order No. 124 putting these terms into effect. District President Christophers called for a six-man commission consisting of two appointees of the Coal Director, the WCOA, and District 18, to investigate wage rates and working conditions of men formerly working ten and eleven hours and now working only eight.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, he demanded a reply by none of April 26; otherwise a district wide strike would be called within 12 hours. He then submitted the question to a referendum vote which rejected Armstrong's ruling and a strike notice was issued for Saturday noon, May 24.<sup>23</sup> With the threat of an impending

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<sup>20</sup>"Policy Committee Wants Mr. Armstrong's decision," DL, Vol. 1, No. 35, April 11, 1919, p.2; Christophers to Armstrong in Minutes, WCOA, April 9, 1919 (Morning Session), Calgary.

<sup>21</sup>Minutes, WCOA, April 15 and April 16, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>22</sup>Christophers to Armstrong, April 25, 1919, quoted in Minutes, WCOA, May 2, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>23</sup>Armstrong's order was issued on April 16. There is evidence to show that considerable rank and file support was being shown to the One Big Union movement in the few weeks prior to Armstrong's order. The fact that Christophers waited first until May 24 for the strike call can be explained by his desire to await the returns of the referendum organized by the OBU. However, on April 26, the date of his ultimatum, several locals had voted overwhelmingly for withdrawal from the UMW - at Fernie alone, the vote was 90% in favour. See "OBU Piles up Sweeping Majorities," DL, Vol. 1, No. 27, April 26, 1919, p.1; "OBU Sweeps to Victory," Ibid., No. 38, May 2, 1919, p.1.



strike, Armstrong decided to offer a cost of living commission as a concession, provided the men would agree to its decision. The district officers refused to commit themselves beforehand, and negotiations ceased. An immediate strike was called by Christophers but it was not authorized by the Executive Board, nor were strike funds granted by the Binational.<sup>24</sup>

The strike call was to take effect on May 24. Several locals held meetings to gather support for OBU principles and the district showed considerable solidarity for the new movement.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, a general strike took place in Winnipeg starting on May 15, and within two weeks, sympathy strikes broke out in Toronto, Regina, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and several other Western cities.<sup>26</sup>

Early in June the district officers, by this time strong supporters of the One Big Union, met in Calgary in an attempt to reopen negotiations with the operators and a series of letters were exchanged

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<sup>24</sup>The Binational Board member, Robert Levitt, resigned on April 4 in order not to be charged with supporting the OBU. He remained consistently against the OBU. For his statement on the OBU, see "International Board Member Resigned," DL, April 4, 1919, p.1. That same day, President Christophers issued a statement noting widespread support for the OBU, and while suggesting that the new organization should be perfected before severing present relations, he added "...should our membership through referendum decide to accept the new form of organization, it behooves us one and all to do our best to make it a success...." Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"One Big Union Principles will Govern District 18 in its Rejection of Order 124", DL, Vol. 1, No. 40, May 16, 1919, p.1; "The OBU to the Fore," WCCR, Vol. 1, No. 11, June 1919, p.38.

<sup>26</sup>For one of the most thorough accounts of the Winnipeg strike and the events surrounding it, see D.G. Masters, The Winnipeg Strike (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950)



between Secretary Browne and Mr. Wilson of the WCOA.<sup>27</sup> The Coal Operators, recognizing the pro-OBU sentiment among the miners, refused to negotiate with the district officials and instead contacted the Binational headquarters in Indianapolis. President Lewis stated the Binational Union was not asking for an agreement at this time, and the Director of Coal Operations, Mr. Armstrong, stated he would not deal with the district officers, but would negotiate only with binational representatives.<sup>28</sup>

On July 10, 1919, a special meeting of the Binational Executive Board was called to study the affairs of District 18 and it was decided to send a three man commission to investigate all events leading to the formation of the OBU and the part played by UMW officials. In Calgary, the WCOA issued a notice that no contract would be made with the District Executive unless it was backed by the Binational Executive Board.<sup>29</sup>

District 18 Charter Revoked. These events were the main factors leading up to the revocation of the UMW Charter in District 18. The commission appointed at the Binational Board meeting on July 10 arrived in Calgary in late July, and after interviewing Christophers and Ed Browne and finding they were card holding members of the OBU, wired Lewis in Indianapolis with a recommendation that the district charter be revoked immediately.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>"Correspondence Preceding Call for a General Strike in District 18," DL, Vol. 1, No. 43, June 6, 1919, pp. 2,6, & 7; "Secretary Browne Publishes all the correspondence Relating to Present Lockout of Workers in District 18," DL, Vol. 1, No. 52, July 25, 1919, p.1.

<sup>28</sup>Minutes, WCOA, July 12, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>29</sup>"Western Coal Operators Much Concerned Over Affairs of Workers Organization in District 18," DL, Vol. 1, No. 51, July 18, 1919, p.3.

<sup>30</sup>"Circular letter is Issued to Miners of Alberta," UMWJ, Vol. 30, No. 16, August 15, 1919, p.4.







The Commission<sup>31</sup> took over complete control over district affairs, including all monies and the control of the District Ledger. An audit of the district's financial statements showed that several strong supporters of the OBU had received UMW monies while organizing the new movement. Soon after they issued a circular letter throughout the district dated July 29, 1919 which outlined the reasons for taking away the Charter, and offered former UMW members the opportunity to rejoin the Binational if they severed their connection with the OBU.

The following day, at a policy meeting of the District 18 Executive, Christophers and Browne decided to reorganize the district as part of the One Big Union, and for a time, they tried to withhold the files and records from the Binational Commission. Ed Browne, Christophers, organizer Alex Susnar, and the Editor of the District Ledger, and several presidents of UMW locals were the principle supporters of the OBU against the Binational. "One thing we are positive on," Ed Browne was quoted as saying, "the miners of District 18 are supporting the OBU and no one is going to dictate to the men what labour organization they will belong."<sup>32</sup>

The Binational Commission moved immediately to gain support from the operators. Meeting with the WCOA on August 6, the binational representatives succeeded in convincing the operators to refuse any negotiations with members of the OBU, and further, to make contracts only with the UMW. Several resolutions were passed by the WCOA to this effect, of which the following were typical:

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<sup>31</sup>Members of the commission were Samuel Ballantyne of Iowa; Samuel Caddy of Washington, and William Dalrymple of Oklahoma.

<sup>32</sup>"District No. 1, Mining Department of One Big Union to Replace District 18, United Mine Workers of America," DL, Vol. 2, No.1, p.1. The new department began enrolling members in to the OBU at several locals formerly under the jurisdiction of the UMW.



That we endorse the stand of the International Representatives and do all that is possible and cooperate with the International Efforts against the One Big Union.

That the whole Association give the International Commission their secret, moral, and solid support in their efforts to organize District No. 18 for the International and have operations resumed under Order No. 124 and a copy of this resolution be handed to Mr. Ballantyne.<sup>33</sup>

This support from the operators resulted in a temporary agreement which brought a resumption of work in most mines throughout the district. A new series of orders issued by the Coal Director stipulated that negotiations for a permanent contract would await a policy for the district made by the Binational convention, although the non-suspension policy remained in effect during negotiations. Furthermore, work was to be resumed with the acceptance of the Tentative Agreement and all orders issued by the Coal Director to date.<sup>34</sup> This temporary agreement was signed by the Coal Director, the WCOA, the the Binational Commission.

However, the rift between the OBU secessionists and the Binational Commission continued for some time. Ed Browne appealed to miners in Nova Scotia for support as Canadian workers fighting an American Union.<sup>35</sup> A well-organized program to spread OBU propaganda met with considerable success, despite the condemnation given the movement by the Binational convention held in September.<sup>36</sup>

On November 15, 1919, Robert Levitt, who had been working closely with the Commission, appealed to the coal operators for a strict application of a closed shop clause. He reviewed the problems faced by

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<sup>33</sup> Minutes, WCOA, August 6, 1919 (Afternoon session), Calgary.

<sup>34</sup> LG, Vol. 19, No. 9, September 1919, p.1052.

<sup>35</sup> "One Big Union Misrepresents UMW," UMWJ, Vol. 30, No. 16, August 15, 1919, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> For a complete review of the events in District 18 and the report of John L. Lewis on the OBU, see UMW, Proceedings, 1919, Vol. 1, pp.53-55.



the UMW and noted that in many cases, men were paying dues to both the UMW and the OBU. Livett added that the whole matter was so serious that unless the UMW was granted a closed shop clause, he felt he should recommend that the UMW withdraw from the Western coal fields.<sup>37</sup>

The coal operators replied that they were sympathetic to the UMW demands, but they would be unable to agree to the closed shop stipulation. However, they recommended that the Government through Mr. Armstrong declare the OBU as an illegal organization, and demand the men to agree to Order No.124.<sup>38</sup>

When the Binational Commission received a telegram dated December 11 from John L. Lewis notifying them of a 14% increase in wages in the United States, they offered to the coal operators a temporary agreement based on the American wage scale, until such time as a permanent contract could be settled.<sup>39</sup> With the participation of Mr. Armstrong and the Federal Minister of Labour, G.D. Robertson, negotiations started on December 16 and a settlement was reached two days later.<sup>40</sup>

According to the terms of the agreement, outlined in Order No. 141 of Mr. Armstrong, the miners were to be granted a 14% wage increase and only members of the UMW could be employed in the mines. When negotiations were completed in the central competitive fields of the United States, representatives of the UMW and the WCOA would meet in Calgary with the coal director to formulate a permanent contract, taking into consideration the findings of the US commission.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Minutes, WCOA, November 15, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>38</sup>Minutes, WCOA, November 27, 1919 (Afternoon session), Calgary.

<sup>39</sup>Minutes, WCOA, December 12, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>40</sup>LG, Vol. 20, No. 1, January 1920, pp.72-73.

<sup>41</sup>For the text of Order No. 141, see *Ibid.*, p.75.





Petitions made by Ed Browne on behalf of the One Big Union were virtually ignored by the Coal Operators. Browne and John Brooke, Chairman of the Miners' Unit, One Big Union had written to the operators on December 2 and December 8 and threatened to take appropriate action by January 1 if their demands for negotiations were not met.<sup>42</sup> After the signing of the temporary agreement on December 18, the Minister of Labour justified the closed shop clause to the OBU firstly because it was necessary to prevent a stoppage in output<sup>43</sup> and secondly, because the operators, unable to recognize two organizations in the same jurisdiction, accepted the UMW and not the OBU because the former had a well established reputation for respecting district contracts.<sup>44</sup>

Not all the miners resumed work immediately, however. A one day strike took place at Bellevue on December 13 and a protest strike involving 250 men at Mountain Park, Local 2655, started on December 29 and lasted 26 days. Both strikes resulted from the refusal of the miners to accept UMW jurisdiction and the check-off.<sup>45</sup>

From the correspondence quoted and the resolutions passed by the Coal Operators, as given in the Minute books of the WCOA, there is every indication that OBU support among the workers was widespread and genuine, despite the work of the Binational Commission and notwithstanding Order No. 141.

Late in January 1920, according to reports given in these Minutes, it was found that OBU leaders were having their supporters enlist as members of the UMW in order to receive the 14% wage increase and from

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<sup>42</sup>Minutes, WCOA, December 10, 11, 1919, Calgary.

<sup>43</sup>For a discussion of Canada's fuel shortage, see "Canada's Coal Requirements: An International Problem," LG, Vol. 19, No. 10, October 1919, pp. 1186-1187.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1920, p.73.

<sup>45</sup>LG, Vol. 20, No. 2, February 1920, p.132.





this advance, help support the OBU. Moreover, because at some mines the majority of workers were pro-OBUE, and strictly speaking unable to work in the mines, there was a shortage of skilled minemen. In these cases, the operators did not want to abide by the closed shop clause of Order No. 141.<sup>46</sup>

Finally there was some question about the Binational Commission's jurisdiction after the Order from Mr. Armstrong was issued, since in effect, the wage agreement was a government measure, not a labour-management contract. At some mines, the Binational Organizers had done very little recruitment, thereby left some of the operators in doubt as to the Commission's actual intentions. In fact, at a meeting of the WCOA held in late January, the Coal Director, Mr. Armstrong, stated he felt the UMW would retire from the field.<sup>47</sup>

In March, Armstrong issued several orders in an attempt to enforce the closed shop clauses of Order No. 141. One Big Union supporters broke out on strike at Bellevue on March 9, and at Blairmore the following day. New orders went out to cover the mines at Canmore, Hillcrest, and Coleman, resulting in a strike at all the mines of about 1800 men on March 22.<sup>48</sup>

Negotiations for Renewal of the Contract in District 18. It will be recalled that the mines in District 18 in 1918 were operating under the terms of a Temporary Agreement ratified by the Coal Director's

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<sup>46</sup>Minutes, WCOA, January 9, 1919, Calgary, and the text of correspondence cited therein.

<sup>47</sup>Minutes, WCOA, January 25, 1919 (Afternoon session), Calgary.

<sup>48</sup>LG, Vol. 20, No. 4, April 1920, p. 417. It is interesting to note that on February 27, 1920, a communication from Morgan Lewis, Acting Chairman of the Binational Commission, sent to F.E. Harrison, assistant to the coal director, asked for closed shop orders at Bellevue, Canmore, and Drumheller. This indicates the close working relationship which existed between the Commission the Coal Director, and the Operators.



Order No. 141. The temporary agreement was based partly on the 14% wage increase granted in the competitive fields of the United States, and partly on the "Tentative Agreement" which had been signed in June 1917 and which was expired on March 31, 1919. It was over a year, therefore, since the district operated without a contract system negotiated directly between the UMW and the Coal Operators.

On May 5, Morgan Lewis asked to open negotiations for a permanent contract on May 20. A scale committee was organized between the operators and the miners, and an agreement was reached on June 10. The chief terms of the agreement were the following:<sup>49</sup>

1. The contract was to run from April 1, 1920 to March 31, 1922, and retroactive monies were to be paid by August 1.
2. The contract included the closed shop clause of Order No. 141, including check-off clauses for all dues and assessments.
3. Wage increases of about 27%, similar to the recommendation of the Federal Coal Commissioner in the United States, were granted bringing the higher cost of living bonus to \$1.17.
4. For working conditions, the 1917-1919 agreement was to be used as the basis, except in cases of mutual agreement.

A referendum held at the various locals approved the contract by a vote of 2728 for, 976 against. The agreement was signed on July 20 and was confirmed by the Director of Coal Operations by Order No. 149.<sup>50</sup>

In September, however, the miners, through their representatives Robert Livett and James Mooney, asked the operators for an advance in wages for day and monthly men in accordance with the scale increase granted in the competitive fields of the United States.<sup>51</sup> A meeting between the miners and the operators was not held until October 5, and

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<sup>49</sup>"New Agreement between the WCOA and District 18," LG, Vol. 20, No. 7, July 1920, p.897.

<sup>50</sup>LG, Vol. 20, No. 7, August 1920, p.1047. For text of the agreement, see Ibid., pp.1049-1053.

<sup>51</sup>Minutes, WCOA, September 23, 1920, Calgary. Livett's letter to the WCOA was dated that same day.



several wildcat strikes broke out in the interim.

Meanwhile the conflict continued throughout the month between the UMW organizers working in the field to rebuild several locals and the proponents of the One Big Union attempting to sabotage the work of the UMW. A One Big Union supported strike commenced on October 1 and lasted until October 19, when the men returned to work on their own accord. Some 3000 miners were involved.<sup>52</sup>

Negotiations proceeding throughout October reached a compromise between the advances made in the United States and in District 18. District 18 officials sought an increase of \$1.50 a day for men, 82¢ for boys, and \$45.00 for monthly men per month. After Coal Director Armstrong agreed to allow an increase in the selling price of coal, the operators granted a supplementary wage scale amounting to about \$1.20 for men and 70¢ for boys.<sup>53</sup> Both the price increase and the wage advance became effective on November 1.

The new wage increase and strict enforcement of the closed shop clause of Order No. 141 combined to bring about the downfall of the One Big Union in District 18. There remained some small pockets of support, especially in the Crow's Nest Pass area and on Vancouver Island. What probably hurt the One Big Union most in the former area was the reliance of the Crow's Nest Pass Company on contracts from the Federal Government. When the Minister of Labour threatened to withdraw such agreements, the Company applied close enforcement of the closed shop clause.<sup>54</sup>

The combined forces of the Federal Government, the Coal Operators, the Director of Coal Operations, and the United Mine Workers, all

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<sup>52</sup>LG, Vol. 20, No. 11, November 1920, p.1474.

<sup>53</sup>For the text of the agreement and the comparative wage rates, see LG, Vol. 20, No. 11, November 1920, p.1547.

<sup>54</sup>WCCR, Vol. 3, No. 10, October 1920, p.37.







working in close harmony, proved to be too much for the OBU although the leaders put most of the blame for their failure in District 18 on the activities of Mr. Armstrong.<sup>55</sup> When the OBU was found guilty and fined for striking on October 1 without making an application under the IDI Act, most strike activity sponsored by the OBU declined completely and its members became reinstated in the UMW.<sup>56</sup> Altogether, the activities of the One Big Union had the immediate effect of getting better wage conditions for members of the UMW. Net earnings of day men had increased from \$5.69 in July 1917 to \$10.41 daily in October 1920.<sup>57</sup>

Restoration of District Charter. The original commission appointed to take over the affairs of District 18 was assisted by several prominent figures in the Binational Organization, including W.D. Warkins, Robert Livett, John P. White, and James Mooney.

By June of 1920, the Binational Committee, by this time consisting of only Livett and Mooney, felt the affairs of District 18 had been sufficiently reorganized as to warrant a special convention to consider the restoration of the district charter. They called a meeting on June 14, which was presided over for the Binational Executive Board by former UMW President John P. White. The first resolution facing the convention, moved by White and seconded by Frank Wheatley, was as follows:

Whereas we have learned from the report of the International representatives of the action of the International Executive Board in convening this special convention for

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<sup>55</sup> Report of the General Executive Board, One Big Union to the Port Arthur Convention, p.45, cited in Logan, op. cit., p.327. A more detailed discussion of the structure and organization of the One Big Union movement in other industrial areas is given in Logan, pp. 297-333.

<sup>56</sup> LG, Vol. 20, No. 11, November 1920, p.1577.

<sup>57</sup> WCCR, Vol. 3, No. 10, October 1920, p.37.



the purpose of considering the advisability of restoring autonomy to District No. 18, holding an election for Board Member and adopting a district constitution; therefore be it resolved by the delegates here assembled, representing the local unions of the United Mine Workers of America, in District No. 18, that we accept the invitation extended by the International Executive Board through its representatives, and without reserve agree to comply with the conditions laid down and pledge our support and cooperation to the end that harmony and c-operation between<sup>58</sup> the various branches of our organization may be obtained.

The resolution passed unanimously. The delegates adopted a constitution in conformity with the laws of the International Union, which provided for an initiation fee of \$10 for practical miners and \$15 for non-practical miners. They also made a demand for a 6 hour day and screening of coal at 2000 pounds to the ton.<sup>59</sup>

After the convention, the district petitioned the Binational Executive Board for the restoration of the charter and full autonomy within the Binational organization. This request was considered in July in Indianapolis, and on August 1, the charter was restored and complete autonomous rights given the members of the territory. A new slate of officers was elected, and announced the same day by William Dalrymple, a member of the original commission to investigate the district in 1919. Ernest G. Williamson of Drumheller was elected President by acclamation, William Ryan, Mountain Park, Vice-President, and Robert Peacock, Lethbridge, Secretary Treasurer. Robert Livett became Binational Board member for the district.<sup>60</sup>

The return to normalcy of the affairs of District 18 was not unlike the troubles which faced the Binational in District 12, in the

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<sup>58</sup>"Autonomy Restored to Mines in District 18," WCCR, Vol.4, No. 7, July 1921, p.36.

<sup>59</sup>"District Conventions of United Mine Workers of America," LG, Vol. 21, July 1921, No. 7, pp. 916-917.

<sup>60</sup>"New Officials of UMWA, District 18," WCCR, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 1921, p.40.



State of Illinois.<sup>61</sup> Starting in August 1919, the insurgent strikes and protests against the Binational led to the revocation of the District 12 Charter. A major distinction between the rebellions in District 18 and District 12 was the role played by the Executives. In Canada, both the President and several members of the District Executive actually participated in the strike against the Binational. In the case of District 12, however, the District President, Frank Farrington, acted for President Lewis in revoking local charters and in restoring peace and order within the territory.<sup>62</sup> However, in both cases, there was considerable misappropriation of union funds and widespread rank and file support for the rebellion.

Moreover, in both district, an exogenous Union force existed to help precipitate the rebellions. In Canada, it was the One Big Union movement which had grown out of dissatisfaction with elements of the TLC. In District 12, part of the conflict grew out of support for Thomas Mooney, an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, who was sentenced for life in California on a murder charge.

Both the revolt in District 18 and the conflict in Illinois were discussed at length at the Binational convention held in Cleveland in September 1919. Although a resolution was presented in favour of the One Big Union concept,<sup>63</sup> strong opposition was given to the motion by Samuel Ballantyne, who had been chairman of the commission in charge of District 18. Ballantyne and other speakers linked the activities of the

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<sup>61</sup>The insurgent strike in District 12 is fully discussed as a case study by Sylvia Kopald, Rebellion in the Labour Unions (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924).

<sup>62</sup>"Problems in District 12," UMWJ, Vol. 31, No. 21, November 1, 1920, pp.3-5.

<sup>63</sup>UMW, Proceedings, 27th Annual Convention, 1921, Vol. 2, pp. 586-587.





One Big Union to the work of the Industrial Workers of the World.<sup>64</sup>

At the Binational convention held in 1921, President John L. Lewis reviewed the problems facing District 18 and the steps taken to rehabilitate the territory. In his concluding remarks, he added:

This brings to a termination the long struggle in that territory against the false philosophy of the proponents of the "One Big Union" idea. The activities of this so-called organization brought nothing but confusion and distress to those mine workers who saw fit to ally themselves with such an element. I feel assured that the experience which has been gained in this struggle will be a lasting object lesson to the mine workers of northwest Canada, and will result in a greater degree of loyalty and appreciation of the organization's accomplishments.<sup>65</sup>

Thus ended one of the most historic conflicts between the Binational organization and a dual organization fighting for supremacy of jurisdiction over a single group of workers.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 590-599

<sup>65</sup>"Rehabilitation of District No. 18," UMW, Proceedings, 1921, p. 96.





## Chapter 8

### THE BREAK UP OF DISTRICT 18 AND RISE OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

Introduction. After the reorganization of District 18 and the restoration of the charter by the Binational, the affairs of the District became marked by a bitter wage struggle between the miners and the coal operators. The war years and the years of the One Big Union dispute saw a sharp increase in the cost of living, and a commensurate increase in the wage scale. On two occasions, there had been a readjustment of the wage scale during the life of the contract to provide the miners with some measure of relief during the period of increased prices. On the first occasion, the Director of Coal Operations, Mr. W.H. Armstrong, intervened on behalf of the miners and ordered a war bonus clause of \$1.17. On the second occasion, the miners received a new wage scale although the operators were permitted to raise the price of coal to cover the wage boost.

What formed the basis of the bitterness and suspicion from 1922 to 1925 and the years following was once again the cost of living and its affects on the wage scale. Unlike the previous period, however, the years following 1921 witnessed a fall in the cost of living, with severe unemployment and rank and file dissension among the mine workers. Because the District Union attempted to follow John Lewis' dictum of "No Backward Step," meaning no decrease in the wage scale despite the downward price-wage spirals, several operators resigned from the Western Canada Coal Operators' Association to make individual contracts with locals at wages below the District scale. Moreover, some miners were willing to work for wages less than the union scale rather than to go on strike with



limited union aid. The result then was a break up of the District into smaller, disorganized groups and the disbandment of the Coal Operators' Association.

The Coal Strike of 1922. The wage agreement signed between the Binational Commission and the Western Canada Coal Operators' Association provided a renegotiation clause to bring the two parties together 30 days before the expiration of the contract, namely on March 31, 1922. However, as early as December of 1921, the operators felt that a strike was pending when the contract ran out.

Although Robert Levitt and other UMW officials expressed a hope that a strike would not take place, there were several reasons to expect trouble. Firstly, the cost of living had fallen again and unemployment was widespread throughout the coal industry. A number of mineworkers were employed only three days a week, and in some cases even less. Secondly, despite the fact that several areas of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba had a coal scarcity, the coal operators had a shortage of orders because coal buyers, feeling that fuel prices were too high, simply postponed or cancelled their orders. Finally, in a number of the smaller mines, there were non-unionized men working at a wage scale below the UMW contract level, and this gave such mines a competitive advantage over the unionized companies.<sup>1</sup>

In February, 1922, a special convention of the United Mine Workers was called in Indianapolis to consider a scale committee report on wages and prices in the United States. This special committee recommended

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<sup>1</sup> "Operators Fear Trouble Over New Wage Agreement," WCCR, Vol. 4, No. 12, December 1921, p. 35.



that all miners work only eight hours daily, that they receive double time for Sundays and holidays and time and a half for overtime, and receive weekly cheques instead of the twice monthly payment installments. Moreover, the committee recommended that any wage differentials within districts be eliminated, and that the present wage scale be maintained for a new two year contract.<sup>2</sup> The convention accepted the committee report and decided that in case a new agreement could not be negotiated by April 1, a general suspension of all operations would be declared. All wage agreements in districts lying outside the Central Competitive Field would run concurrently with the CCF contract, subject to ratification by the district membership.<sup>3</sup>

In District 18, union officials and representatives of the coal operators met in Calgary on March 2 to negotiate a settlement for a new contract. Robert Levitt, Binational Board member and chairman of the miners' wage committee, submitted the UMW demands: a six hour work day for all miners; maintenance of the present wage scale; abolition of the contract system; measurement of coal for pay at 2000 pounds; overtime for Sundays and holidays and weekly pay cheques; and a two year contract to run from April 1, 1922 and ending March 31, 1924.<sup>4</sup>

The following day, the Operators offered a counter-proposal with a wage scale based on the 1915 agreement,<sup>5</sup> and added a stipulation that a cost of living clause be incorporated into the contract effective when

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<sup>2</sup> In District 18, the Drumheller area operated on a wage scale arrived separately from the District agreement.

<sup>3</sup> LG, Vol. 22, No. 3, March 1922, p. 307.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 2, 1922 (Morning Session), Calgary.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter V, supra.





the agreement was signed, and subject to modifications in accordance with the findings of a cost of living commission which would sit regularly. Robert Levitt replied that such an agreement, in view of the recommendations of the Indianapolis convention, was not acceptable to the miners, although he suggested that present disagreements might be ironed out. However, with negotiations at a stalemate, the meeting was adjourned sine die.<sup>6</sup>

After these first negotiations broke off, the operators posted at all companies a wage scale which they stated would go into effect on April 1. The miners voted on this offer, and rejected it by an overwhelming majority. On March 21, union officials offered to apply for a Board of Conciliation under the IDI Act of 1907, and agreed to use the existing wage rate without suspension of operations until the Board submitted its report.<sup>7</sup>

Four days later, however, the miners, through Robert Levitt, offered to reopen negotiations directly with the operators, and suggested a withdrawal of the original demands for a six hour day and a 25 percent wage increase, providing that the Association would make a substantial alteration to its original proposals. The previous offer to withhold a strike vote was not mentioned.<sup>8</sup>

On March 31, 1922, the Minister of Labour appointed W.E. Knowles as Chairman, and H. Ostland and R.G. Drinnan represented the miners and

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<sup>6</sup> Minutes, Joint Conference of WCCOA and District 18, March 3, 1922, Calgary.

<sup>7</sup> Strictly speaking, neither the miners nor the operators could apply for a Board under the IDI Act, since the contract had not yet expired. Because of the danger of an immediate strike, the Minister of Labour offered to forego the formal procedures and appointed a Chairman without the usual five day waiting period for recommendations of each side's nominees.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 31, 1922, Calgary.



the operators respectively and the Board was sworn in the following day in Calgary. At the same time, with the expiration of the contract in District 18 and in the Central Competitive Field, 400,000 members of the United Mine Workers started a national strike.<sup>9</sup>

The Conciliation Board presented its report on June 13. Recognizing the problems of reducing a wage schedule which had increased 136.7 percent since 1911,<sup>10</sup> the report attempted to compromise between the wage increase sought by the miners and the reduction demanded by the operators. It recommended that the \$1.17 cost of living bonus awarded during the war be discontinued, and that the agreement dated June 10, 1920 be continued as the basis for a new contract, with a 15 percent general reduction.<sup>11</sup> A minority report submitted by Mr. Drinnan recommended that the 1915 contract be used as a basis for a new wage scale with a corresponding 25 percent wage reduction for contract miners and 40 percent for underground miners.<sup>12</sup>

Both sides refused to accept the conditions of the Conciliation report, and despite the efforts of the Chairman, Mr. Knowles, to reopen negotiations, the strike continued. Early in August both the Premier of Alberta, Mr. Greenland, and the Federal Minister of Labour, Hon. James Murdock, attempted to bring the parties together. Negotiations started again on August 5 and wage proposals dealt with variations of the Knowles Conciliation Report, and the Drinnan Minority Report.

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<sup>9</sup> LG, Vol. 22, No. 4, April 1922, p. 405.

<sup>10</sup> "Strike Situation Unchanged on Conclusion of Hearings," WCCR, Vol. 5, No. 6, June 1922, p. 27. The information was given by Robert Levitt at a hearing in Calgary.

<sup>11</sup> "Report of Conciliation Board in District 18," LG, Vol. 22, No. 7, July 1922, pp. 659-662.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 662-663.



On August 23, the two parties reached a settlement which was based on the agreement made in the United States. According to the new terms, the clauses on working conditions in the 1920 contract were continued for the life of the new agreement, namely one year ending March 31, 1923. All day wages and contract rates were reduced 15 percent effective immediately, pending a final settlement on wages in the Central Competitive Field.<sup>13</sup> This contract was immediately endorsed by the miners by a referendum vote, and work was resumed at all mines on August 28.

On September 1 the Minister of Labour, Mr. Murdock, informed the miners and the coal operators of the final agreement reached in the United States, which provided for the continuation of the wage rates existing in 1921. In accordance with the temporary settlement made on August 23, the wage rates in District 18 were based on the 1921 rates effective September 1.<sup>14</sup> This final agreement based on the American wage scale caused no disruption in operations, although there were a few minor pit head strikes in the months following over interpretations of the working condition clauses.<sup>15</sup>

Although the strike brought the new wage scale in District 18 to the same level as in the United States with no decrease in wage rates, the miners' victory in Canada did little to correct the problems facing the coal industry in the western provinces. For one thing unemployment was still a major problem among the mine workers. The Knowles Commission had found that in the bituminous mines, men averaged only 197 working days

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<sup>13</sup> For text of the agreement, see LG, Vol. 22, No. 9, September 1922, p.654.

<sup>14</sup> LG, ibid., p. 954.

<sup>15</sup> For the text of the agreement signed in the CCF, see ibid., pp. 957-958.





a year, and in Bankhead, the only anthracite mine in District 18, the average was 209 3/4 days. In the 15 lignite mines of Drumheller, the average number of working days each year was only 128 1/2. The major problem, of course, was that most mining was of a season nature, so that during the actual mining period, there was almost no unemployment.

The second problem of the coal industry was the competition in the Winnipeg markets from eastern American coal. The mines of District 18 increased their output considerably in response to the war time demands. However, with the cessation of hostilities and the consequential decrease in demand for coal, the operators faced a problem in maintaining production at the record wartime levels. The WCCOA made a proposal in October to increase sales in the Winnipeg area, but there remained the problem of western coal producers not having a standardized grade and registered trade mark to distinguish the Canadian product from American imports.<sup>16</sup>

The one year agreement signed in August 1922 was adhered to by both parties, and there was only one period of disruption of work owing to disagreements in the interpretation of the contract. On January 3, 1923, 670 miners went out on strike in Michel for four days as a result of disagreement over working conditions. Another strike had occurred at the Nordegg mine in Edmonton for union recognition which involved 450 men. In line with the terms providing for settlement of disputes during the life of the contract, the union submitted an application to the Minister of Labour for an independent Chairman of the joint labour-management committee consisting of District President William Sherman

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, October 7, 1922, Calgary.





and WCCOA Commissioner R.M. Young. The Minister appointed W. Knowles to serve as Chairman and a settlement was reached at the end of January.<sup>17</sup>

Renewal of the 1923 Agreement. On March 3 negotiations for a new contract began with the miners presenting their demands for a continuation of the 1922 agreement, subject to several changes in certain aspects of "deadwood" and supplies.<sup>18</sup> On March 12, the operators presented a counterproposal which outlined reasons why such changes were not warranted at the previous coal prices. They demanded a continuation of the existing agreement with a 10 percent general deduction on the wage scale.<sup>19</sup> The following day, March 13, the wage scale committee representative of both operators and miners compromised on the original demands, and decided to continue the existing contract in all its terms, provisions, and conditions until March 31, 1924. Both sides accepted this compromise and signed an agreement on March 14, seventeen days before the old contract expired.<sup>20</sup>

The avoidance of any strike action in 1923 helped to bring production in District 18 to a total of 5,298,745 tons, compared to 4,037,159 tons in 1922. The year proved to be one of the quietest in the history of the district in terms of strike action, although the operators expected such a situation would be of short duration. The main reason was that the operators felt District 18 agreements should not be based on contracts reached in the Central Competitive Field of the United States.

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<sup>17</sup> LG, Vol. 23, No. 3, March 1923, p. 236. The issues in dispute involved cross-cuts and overshovelling at Drumheller, living accommodations at Canmore, pushing cars into mines at Michel, and rock classifications at Nordegg.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 2, 1923, Calgary.

<sup>19</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 12, 1923, Calgary.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 14, 1923, Calgary.



The annual meeting of the operators held on January 11, 1924, gives ample evidence of the conditions facing District 18, and the problems of reaching a wage settlement before the March 31 deadline. In the words of President Shanks,

It is proper, however, that I should suggest...the necessity for this Association considering how far the traditional policy upon which its wage adjustments have been made in the past, shall continue to be its guide for the future. There were good grounds in years gone by...for finding in the Central Competitive Field a basis for comparative action here. Adopted originally as a method of resisting comparison with wages in other U.S. Districts, it was then and has continued to be little more than a policy of defense, and adherence to it has continued long after other considerations might well have justified a change of view.

What the attitude of the Central Competitive Field will be in making a new agreement it is at this moment impossible to say. Little if any assistance can be looked for from the findings of the Federal Coal Commission and the award of a 10% increase in the Anthracite Field by Governor Pinchot recently will not make negotiations for the bituminous mines any easier.<sup>21</sup>

However, in the negotiations for the 1924 agreement, both the operators and the miners announced that they would not be bound by the findings of a government appointed conciliation board. The miners continued to maintain that the safest kind of settlement was one on which the wage scale in District 18 had a comparative basis, particularly in light of the large imports of American coal from the Central Competitive Field into Canada.<sup>22</sup>

UMWA Efforts to Unionize Edmonton Coal Fields. The first earnest efforts to organize the Edmonton coal fields under UMW jurisdiction took place in 1908. However, only two locals were established and most organization work ceased before the War. In November of 1920, the miners

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<sup>21</sup> Minutes, WCCOA Annual Meeting, January 11, 1924, Calgary.

<sup>22</sup> The average yearly imports of domestic anthracite into Canada over the five years ending 1923 was 4,462,887 tons. Of this 127,282 tons was imported into the Maritime Provinces and 27,997 tons in Western Canada. The balance 4,307,608 tons was used in Central Canada. See "A National Coal Policy," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 12, December 1925, pp. 17-20.



of Humberstone Coal Company demanded that the company pay the same wage rates as those existing in the Drumheller field. When the company refused to accede to the demands, the miners went out on strike on November 20, and within a week miners at the other five mines in the Edmonton fields also walked off their jobs.

At this time there was only one UMW body, Local No. 4070, and miners at several collieries were invited to join this local. On December 4, an agreement was made between the men and the companies to resume work while a Board of Conciliation studied the issues in the dispute.<sup>23</sup> The application for the Board was signed by Dennis Gildea and L.W. Ferguson, President and Secretary respectively of the UMW local. The Board, consisting of C.D. Fisher of Saskatoon, Chairman, Mayne Reid, Edmonton, acting for the operators, and Robert Levitt, representing the miners, made its majority and minority reports on January 21, 1921. During the Board hearings, James Dunn reported for the operators that it was impossible for the 15 companies in the Edmonton field to meet the UMW demands because the lignite coal mined in this field was of inferior quality to the coal mined in Drumheller, having about six percent higher moisture content. Moreover, the seams were much thicker in the Drumheller area which made mine operations less expensive than Edmonton. Despite these claims, the majority report recommended recognition of the UMW throughout the Edmonton coal fields, standardization of wage scales at all the mines, and a signing of a written contract between the men and the operators.<sup>24</sup> In a minority report, Mayne Reid charged the UMW with a

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<sup>23</sup> The compromise agreement to apply for a Conciliation Board was brought about by Mr. D. Rigg, of the Department of Labour.

<sup>24</sup> For the text of the majority and minority reports, see LG, Vol. 21, No. 3, March 1921, pp. 316-327.





breach of existing contracts, and added that a majority of the men did not want to join or associate with the UMW.

Even with the UMW efforts to make a settlement covering all mines in the Edmonton field, the companies were able to continue operations throughout the spring. In June the Edmonton operators made an agreement with the men for three years, effective from June 7, 1921. However, this settlement was not part of the District 18 contract, and it permitted the Edmonton mines to operate even in the event of a strike elsewhere.

In February of 1923, the miners of the Edmonton field joined the Canadian Federation of Labour.<sup>25</sup> Two months previous the UMW had made a concerted effort to bring the miners under its jurisdiction, but this attempt proved to be a dismal failure. A short-lived strike in December turned to riots at the Black Diamond and Humberstone mines, and five miners were arrested, including William Ryan, UMW Vice-President of District 18. The Edmonton courts issued an injunction which restrained the United Mine Workers from further organization work in the area, and this caused the UMW effort to die out.<sup>26</sup> After the miners accepted the invitation from the Canadian Federation of Labour, the various companies in the Edmonton field decided to form an organization separate from the Western Canadian Coal Operators' Association. In June the Edmonton operators formed an organization entitled the Northern Alberta Coal Operators' Association to deal with unionized labour in the field as a body instead of as individual companies. C.W. Leonard became the Association's first president.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> "Miners Join Labour Federation," WCCR, Vol. 7, No. 4, April 1923, p.16. For an analysis of the organization and character of the CFL, see H.A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, pp. 370-393.

<sup>26</sup> "Miners Officials Arrested," WCCR, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 1922, p.28.

<sup>27</sup> "Edmonton Operators Organize," WCCR, Vol. 6, No. 6, June 1923, p.14.



On June 7, 1923 an agreement was made between the Association and the miners, by this time organized as the Edmonton and District Miners' Federation, Canadian Federation of Labour.<sup>28</sup> The new agreement gave recognition of the right of management to hire and discharge workers, offered recognition to the Miners' Union, and granted a checkoff on union dues up to \$1.00 per month. Like the UMW contracts, a clause was inserted for settlement of disputes during the life of the contract by referral of the issue to the President and Superintendent of the Union and Mine respectively, and failing agreement, by referral to an independent chairman, with no work stoppage to occur pending settlement. The agreement became effective September 1, 1923 and lasted until June 30, 1924.

The 1924 Coal Strike. The District 18 agreement signed in March 1923 expired a year later without settlement for a new contract, and one of the longest and bitterest strikes in the history of District 18 resulted. The strike was important not only for the light it gives on the breakdown in communication between the miners and the operators, but also because it caused severe consequences for the future of District 18. For the operators, the most important issues in the dispute were the desire for a competitive wage scale to meet prices of imports from the United States and to compensate for a decrease in the cost of living. For the union, there remained the difficult question of maintaining the existing wage scale in the face of falling prices, and of preventing non-unionized miners from competing with those mines under UMW jurisdiction. What made the strike a foregone failure, however, was the lack of financial

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<sup>28</sup> According to the findings of the 1925 Alberta Royal Commission, the NACOA was active only at the time of negotiating contracts, and membership in that body was not taken seriously by the Edmonton Operators. See Report of Alberta Coal Commission, p. 188.



support from the United Mine Workers. A proliferation of strikes in the United States and some very expensive court cases had depleted the UMW treasury and made strike pay impossible for Western Canada workers. The prolonged strike in District 18 caused great dissatisfaction among the workmen themselves, and ultimately led to the withdrawal of several locals from the UMW banner. This breakup of the district again caused great disruption among the UMW locals and forced the binational headquarters to take over control of the affairs of District 18.

Negotiations between the WCCOA and officials of District 18 began on March 4, 1924 with the union proposing a renewal of the 1923 contract for a three year period, with the provision that certain adjustments for dead work and supplies be made during the life of the contract. The operators offered to renew the existing contract for one year, provided that the wage scale be decreased by \$1.17 per day, namely, the amount of the cost of living bonus given during the war and added to the wage scale in 1920.<sup>29</sup>

Although the operators in the United States bituminous mines in the CCF and the United Mine Workers agreed to continue their existing contract for a three year period extending to 1927, a similar settlement was not acceptable to the parties in District 18. The Canadian miners refused to accept any wage reduction, and cited the record of continuous profits in many of the mines as proof the companies could afford to increase wages. The operators, on the other hand, argued that any higher wages would force a higher selling price, and would cause such traditional

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<sup>29</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, March 4, 1924, Calgary.





coal users as railways to substitute fuel oil for domestic coal.<sup>30</sup>

A second joint committee meeting was held on March 13, 1924 but even with the efforts of F.E. Harrison of the Department of Labour, no settlement was reached. On March 28, the operators stated they would pay maintenance men the existing wage scale in the case of a strike. A strike vote was taken by the miners, which authorized strike action by a count of 4,696 in favour and only 282 against. With this vote taken, the contract expired on April 1, and the miners under UMW jurisdiction in District 18 went on strike.<sup>31</sup>

In July, officials of District 18 sent out a circular to all labour organizations in Canada appealing for moral and financial support because the United Mine Workers in Indianapolis had notified the District that strike aid, because of the strikes in the United States and the depressed conditions and unemployment, would not be forthcoming for UMW workmen.<sup>32</sup> The lack of financial support caused considerable discontent at several UMW locals. In June a mass meeting at the Gladstone local at Fernie organized a "Miners' Committee" to express their dissatisfaction with the District officials and to consider on their own some proposals offered by the Crow's Nest Pass Company. District President Sherman promised temporary relief to the extent of \$3000 from the District treasury, and an open break was averted.<sup>33</sup> In Drumheller, the UMW local was unable to elect a full slate of officers because of the discontent among the rank and file.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For details of the demands made by the operators and the miners, see LG, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1924, pp. 297-298.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>32</sup> "Poor Prospect for Strike Relief," WCCR, Vol. 7, No. 7, July 1924, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> "Some Lethbridge Mines Working," Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> "A Test of Endurance," Ibid, p. 24.





In August, District President Sherman offered to reopen negotiations with the operators. A meeting between the parties was held on August 8, at which the Minister of Labour, Mr. Murdock, attempted to reach a settlement on the basis of a 15 percent wage reduction. These negotiations broke down within a week. In September a special District convention was held to support the previous stand against a wage reduction. At this convention representatives of Binational headquarters in Indianapolis and the Department of Labour attended, but neither side would change its original position.<sup>35</sup>

Another conference was held in late September, this time under the auspices of F.E. Harrison. The miners agreed to a reduction of \$1.00 for contract men and 12 1/2 percent for day workers. They later accepted a suggestion from the labour officer that wages be reduced by \$1.17 per day, but negotiations again broke off when the operators refused to sign a three year contract. As a result, this conference adjourned without settlement until October to meet with the Minister of Labour.<sup>36</sup> A new conference started on October 6 with the Premier of Alberta, Mr. Greenland, and the Minister of Labour, Mr. Murdock, acting as conciliators. They reached a settlement on October 10, which provided for a wage reduction of \$1.17 for contract work and one-eighth reduction of pay for day men (about 90 cents). The new contract ran for three years to March 31, 1927, subject to cancellation by either party after March 31, 1925 on six months' notice.<sup>37</sup> The mine workers ratified the agreement

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<sup>35</sup> LG, Vol. 24, No. 8, August 1924, p. 773.

<sup>36</sup> Minutes, WCCOA, September 27, 1924, Calgary.

<sup>37</sup> LG, Vol. 24, No. 10, October 1924, p. 830. For terms of the agreement, see "A Settlement in Sight," WCCR, October 1924, Vol. 7, No. 10, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> LG, Vol. 24, No. 9, September 1924, pp. 744-745.



on October 16 and resumed work in all mines within one week.

The Edmonton Agreement. Negotiations for renewal of the contract in the Edmonton fields began on May 30, 1924, one month before the termination of the separate contract. The miners proposed an extension of the contract for one year with minor revisions in the wage scale for dead work and standardization of pay at all the mines in the Edmonton district. The Edmonton operators submitted a counterproposal agreeing to standardize the pay scale, but at a rate of 13 percent below the existing contract.<sup>38</sup> When agreement was not reached, the two parties applied for a Board of Conciliation to the Department of Labour, and the Minister appointed a Board on July 24, although there was no work stoppage. Presenting its report on August 8, the Board recommended a continuation of the existing contract with minor changes in the wage scale for workers in wet places and dead work.<sup>39</sup> For some workers, the Board's recommendations amounted to about a ten percent reduction.

With the presentation of the Board's report, the miners voted against acceptance of the wage scale, but the majority was not large enough to warrant strike action. In October the Board Chairman, James Smith, helped to mediate a contract settlement on the basis of the Board's report. The agreement was in force from October 31, 1924 to June 30, 1925, and was signed between representatives of the Edmonton and District Federation, and each of the seven operators in the Edmonton field.<sup>40</sup>

Breakup of District 18 as a Bargaining Unit. The contract which was signed in District 18 in October 1924 included only those companies

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 745.

<sup>40</sup> LG, Vol. 24, No. 11, November 1924, pp. 937-938.



which belonged to the WCCOA. During the negotiations for this contract, the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company at Fernie and Michel, and the Rosedale Coal Company at Rosedale, resigned from the Association and attempted to make separate contracts at a scale lower than the district wage rate to permit them to meet competition in steam coal from American markets. This development led to the organization of the B.C. Miners' Union which was separate and distinct from the UMW.

A Miners' Committee, similar to that formed in June,<sup>41</sup> met with W.R. Wilson to negotiate a company contract, and on December 6, 1924 the Fernie miners voted to sever their connection with District 18 and to sign their own contract.<sup>42</sup> The first agreement of the B.C. Miner's Union signed at Fernie and Coal Creek on December 18, was effective from December 21, 1924 to March 31, 1928. In January the miners at Michel voted to accept an agreement which provided for a day wage about 20 cents higher than at Fernie.<sup>43</sup>

The example of the Fernie and Michel miners was copied by a number of other locals throughout District 18. On March 31, the WCCOA notified the UMW that in accordance with the October 10 contract, the District 18 agreement would expire on September 30, mainly because of the lower wage scale in the Crow's Nest Pass.<sup>44</sup>

District 18 officials attempted to open negotiations during March, but several of the operators withdrew from the WCCOA and tried to make

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<sup>41</sup> See page 171, supra.

<sup>42</sup> "Ferne Breaks Away from UMWA," WCCR, Vol. 7, No. 12, December 1924, p.32.

<sup>43</sup> "Ferne Mines Accept New Scale," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 1, January 1925, p.4.

<sup>44</sup> "Operators to Terminate Contract," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1925, p.30.





separate settlements outside the District scale in line with Fernie. Several mines were forced to close, and at Hillcrest, after a number of men voted to leave the UMW on April 17, the union picketed the Hillcrest mines. Provincial police were posted at the company, and on April 25, the men agreed to work at the Fernie wage scale.<sup>45</sup>

A few weeks previously, on April 7, miners at Bellevue and Coleman decided to work at the reduced scale, and by June some 3500 mines had left the UMW. Only the men at the domestic mines in Drumheller and at the steam mines at Luscar, Mountain Park, and Cadomin west of Edmonton, remained affiliated with District 18.<sup>46</sup>

In July a new miners' union was formed in the Red Deer Valley over protests against UMW officials signing an amended contract for Drumheller, although the new agreement was not submitted to the membership for ratification. This new body, called the Red Deer Valley Miners' District Union, was favoured by 84 percent of the membership on a vote taken on June 21. The new officers expressed considerable resentment against both the District officials and the Binational Union, and in the public statements announcing its formation, they emphasized the "Canadian" aspect of the new union.<sup>47</sup>

Mine Workers Union of Canada. In September, 35 delegates representing various local unions from the Crow's Nest Pass, Blairmore, Coleman, Corbin, Bellevue, the Edmonton district, Drumheller, and Canmore

<sup>45</sup> "Separate Wage Agreements in Domestic Field," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 1925, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> LG, Vol. 25, No. 5, May 1925, p. 514.

<sup>47</sup> See for example, "New Union Issues Statement," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 7, July 1925, p. 8; "New Union Holds Public Meeting," Ibid., p. 15, LG, Vol. 25, No. 7, July 1925, p. 661.



met in Calgary and decided to form an all Canadian Union called the Mine Workers' Union of Canada. The delegates, headed by Frank Wheatley, President of the Alberta Federation of Labour, drew up a constitution which called for nationalization of the coal mines, support for a Canadian labour party, and measures for labour defense against falling prices.<sup>48</sup>

This new organization, which incorporated the newly formed Red Deer Valley Miners' Association, reduced membership in the United Mine Workers to only seven locals and 1500 miners, as compared with 9000 members prior to the 1924 strike. On September 1, William Sherman resigned as President of District 18; vice-president William Ryan had resigned the previous month.<sup>49</sup> Early in October, District Secretary Peacock submitted his resignation and the Binational Union once again took control of the affairs of District 18. In November, Binational Board Member Robert MacDonald left the union and Robert Levitt assumed control of the District.<sup>50</sup>

On November 28, 1925 officials of the WCCOA decided to disband the organization in view of the breakup of District 18. After this development, there followed a thirteen year period of disorganization and rivalry for membership among the various labour bodies. Basically the real problem remained the issue of wage reduction versus holding the line on existing rates, often with futile opposition to the operators' demands for lower wages to meet depressed conditions.

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<sup>48</sup> "An All Canadian Union," WCCR, Vol. 8, No. 10, October 1925, p. 31; LG, Vol. 25, No. 11, November 1925, pp. 1090-1091.

<sup>49</sup> WCCR, Vol. 28, No. 9, September 1925, p. 29.

<sup>50</sup> Levitt actually ran the District after Sherman resigned on September 1, 1925. Later, John Lewis appointed Levitt as his personal representative in District 18 to handle its affairs.



The Mine Workers' Union never succeeded in getting a district-wide contract, mainly because the operators refused to reorganize their Association. The UMW charged that the MWUC was communist inspired, although it appeared to have no connection with the communist movements in the American coal fields.

District 18 affairs were guided mainly by Robert Levitt, who was assisted by Angus Morrison, elected Secretary-Treasurer by the remaining locals of the District. In 1926 there were only seven locals in the UMW, with about 1500 miners enrolled. In this report to Binational President Lewis sent on February 27, 1926, Levitt described the conditions prevailing in the District and offered his own advice for future action:

At the present time we have four organizations or so-called organizations of miners within this District. I.W.W. are fairly strong in the Wayne and Drumheller Fields. We have the Canadian Union of Mine Workers [sic] and a smattering of the One Big Unionists and as I have already stated 1185 members in the United Mine Workers so you can readily imagine the unfortunate position that the mine workers in this District find themselves in. However, I am not bemoaning the fact because I am of the opinion the men of District 18 needed this lesson to prove to them who had been their greatest friends, the United Mine Workers of America or these cure all organizations that are springing up from time to time within this District and which are usually met with open arms by a large number of men in this locality.

It will take some time to fully re-establish the United Mine Workers of America on account of national prejudice and on account of the vilification and abuse against all of the officials of the United Mine Workers of America for the last three or four years in this territory. I am still of the same opinion that no great amount of finances should be spent by the International Organization in an endeavour to re-establish the Organization to its former status. I am of the opinion these dual Organizations that are now in existence should fight it out and let the membership kill all dualism before any great attempt is made by the United Mine Workers of America.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Levitt to Lewis, District 18 correspondence, February 27, 1926.





In 1936, the Alberta Federation of Labour sponsored a conference in Calgary held to decide the union jurisdiction in District 18. The United Mine Workers and the Mine Workers' Union of Canada decided to hold a referendum among all the locals and independents. As a result of this vote, all locals of the MWUC and several independent locals were absorbed into District 18. The locals in the Edmonton fields had voted to rejoin the UMW in 1932.

With the reorganization of the District complete in 1937 and the absorption of the independent locals at Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) on Vancouver Island in 1938, the operators in the bituminous mines decided to organize the Western Canada Bituminous Coal Operators' Association, including steam coal operators. The only exceptions were the mines at Coleman and Hillcrest where the miners did not return to the UMW.

The period after 1925 has not yet been recorded, and the foregoing gives only a brief overview of the events following the 1924 strike. The breakup of District 18 was part of a general disruption in the once solid UMWA organization. In Canada, District 26 also broke away from the Binational although some locals were still under UMW jurisdiction. In 1935 some dissident miners formed an organization called the Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia, but in 1935, the membership returned to UMW jurisdiction.

After the Second World War the reorganization of District 18 made it stronger than ever. The union was able to win better wages and working conditions than any previous contract, and the district was put on a sound financial basis. However, the return to strength in District 18 was part of a larger improvement of the entire Binational Union after 1932.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> H.A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, p. 198. See also Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 286-289.





However, the problems of producing and selling coal persisted. The long years of the depression in the thirties had resulted in the virtual collapse of the coal industry. In the face of falling demand for coal, and collapsed selling prices, production in the mines of both Canada and the United States dropped to the lowest levels in decades. Moreover, as output fell, alternate sources of fuel, particularly gas, hydroelectricity, and fuel oil, forced the coal operators either to mechanize and replace labour with machines, despite union opposition, or simply to close down and sell the mines.

The following description of the catastrophe which faced the American coal industry applied equally to Canada as to the United States:

The structure of the bituminous industry was totally inadequate to meet the crisis. Capacity vastly exceeded demand; the business units were all small and much too numerous; the horizon of the typical operator was fixed at the line of its own property. The consumers of bituminous--mainly large steel, railway, and utility corporations--played one operator against the other in fixing prices. Further, prices failed to adjust output to demand. In the mines capital investment was large and depreciation unusually rapid, accelerating with time. Hence the operator often lost less money by maintaining high output even if he had to sell his coal below cost. To describe the price market as disorderly would be an understatement; it was a classic case of cutthroat competition.

Since labour constituted two-thirds of mine costs, the operator passed on his falling prices in lower wages. Survival depended upon wiping out union wage scales and with them the union itself.<sup>53</sup>

Faced with these conditions, the entire Binational organization lost membership and surrendered much of its influence in the American Federation of Labour. President John L. Lewis, consolidating his position in the UMW by 1930, continued to fight for complete centralization

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<sup>53</sup> Irving Bernstein, The Lean Years (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 360.



despite widespread dissatisfaction in several districts.

The insurgent strikes and the rejection of UMW principles displayed in District 18 in the twenties followed a similar pattern in Pennsylvania, Illinois, West Virginia, Kentucky, and the Ohio-Indiana areas of the Central Competitive Field--all the areas which at one time formed the strength and backbone of America's largest and most influential labour body.



## Chapter IX

### TRADE UNIONISM IN THE WESTERN COAL INDUSTRY: SOME CONCLUSIONS

The detailed study of trade unionism in the Western coal industry has the advantage of being a case study involving several kinds of unions and the subsequent conflicts which stemmed from union rivalry for allegiance and support. Beginning at the turn of the century, trade unionism developed from the establishment of independent locals at Rossland, B.C. which later joined the Western Federation of Miners. The Western Federation attempted to organize both coal miners and metalliferous miners in British Columbia. However, after the great coal strikes of 1903, it was forced to retire from the coal fields completely. In its place came the United Mine Workers of America, which established District 18 extending throughout Alberta, British Columbia, and parts of Saskatchewan. As an industrial union, the UMW fought for the establishment of uniform wage rates, district wide collective bargaining, and improved working conditions. In this report, the UMW differed greatly with the Western Federation, which tended to rely on radicalism and force to achieve its goals.

After the First World War, a split in the Canadian labour movement between Eastern labour leaders in Ontario and Western delegates from British Columbia and the Prairies, prompted several Western leaders, including some members of the United Mine Workers, District 18, to form what became known as the One Big Union. The One Big Union tried to combine the radicalist social doctrines of such movements as the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the class movement struggle of the Russian Bolshevik movement.

However, the One Big Union was unable to secure contracts for the





coal miners. A special commission of the UMW was successful in obtaining a closed shop contract by which only members of the United Mine Workers Union could work in the mines of District 18. This provision was backed by an order from the Director of Coal Operations. Together with an improved wage scale, the closed shop order proved to be an effective weapon against the insurgents, and the One Big Union died out.

After the rebellion, a number of locals in District 18 decided not to return to the UMW fold, and became independent locals which made contracts with only one company. By 1925, a number of these independent locals joined together to form the Mine Workers Union of Canada, but this body never achieved a standard wage scale and common agreement with the coal operators. In fact, with the breakup of District 18 after 1924, the Western Canadian Coal Operators' Association disbanded completely in 1925 and did not reorganize until the recovery of the United Mine Workers in Western Canada in 1936.

This study concludes that two major factors contributed to the heavy labour unrest in District 18, namely the environmental influences, and the nature of the trade unions fighting for support of the workers in the coal mines.

#### SOURCES OF LABOUR CONFLICT: ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

The environmental influences can be summarized in terms of (a) the economics of the coal industry; (b) the social conditions of the coal mining communities and the people who lived in them; and (c) the legal and political factors attendant on the coal industry.

Economics of the Coal Industry. The labour conflict in District 18 was directly associated with the economic problems of the coal industry. Firstly, there was the seasonal production of the mines which meant that



output virtually ceased from May to September. In order to win an adequate annual income, the United Mine Workers fought for a wage adjustment which would compensate for the several months of unemployment during the offseason. Secondly, there was the fact that Canada was both a large exporter of domestic coal and a large importer of anthracite coal, chiefly from the United States. This situation was a major reason why the UMW desired to unionize all miners in the Canadian fields, so that companies operating with non-unionized workers would not have an economic advantage over companies in UMW fields in the northwestern areas of the United States. Thirdly, the western coal industry featured a multi-employer situation for the unions. There were both large and small companies in District 18. The larger companies adapted their operations to new technological advances and achieved economies of scale. The smaller companies, on the other hand, tried to resist new mining methods, and fought the union over safety features and working conditions. The UMW consistently justified their demands for increased wages on the basis of increased profits of the well managed companies, and forced the smaller companies either to rationalize their operations or be forced to close down in favour of the larger companies. In several cases in District 18, heavy strike activity and demands for higher wages resulted in smaller companies ceasing operations or attempting to maintain production with the help of nonunionized workmen.

The Social Conditions of the Communities. The coal communities in Western Canada were at once both pioneer towns and company towns. Often the new operation of a coal mine was the major impetus to starting the coal towns which stretched along the CPR railways in southern Alberta and new settlers were attracted to these areas by the possibility of



employment in and around the mines. However, most of the western communities were also "company towns" so that the workmen were dependent on the company not only for employment but also for food, shelter, and supplies. This dependence led to a sense of frustration, suspicion, and even resentment with the companies' management, so that labour conflict was found to worsen in the event of possible strike action.

Moreover, the high mobility of the workmen brought a strong foreign influence to the coal communities. The UMW attempted to meet the problem of organizing foreign workmen to its principles by using organizers who spoke the foreign languages; notices were posted in different tongues; and even the United Mine Workers Journal carried its reports in three languages. Until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, communication between UMW organizers and foreign mineworkers improved greatly. During the war, when many of the native Canadian miners went overseas, the proportion of foreign speaking workmen reached over eighty percent. As a result, the discipline of the union decreased, as the foreign element preferred more militant tactics to win wage demands than District 18 leaders desired. This disagreement during the War later shifted to outright rebellion with the One Big Union.

Many of the mines in District 18 experienced tragic accidents in the shafts which made the fatality rate in the District one of the worst in North America. Consequently, the labour conflict during numerous pit head strikes and walkouts was caused by a fear on the part of the miners that adequate safety precautions had not been taken by the company management. Moreover, although new legislation improved matters with the passage of the Coal Mines Regulation Act in 1906 and amendments two years later, the record of fatal accidents remained very high and re-





sulted in deterioration of labour relations in the coal industry throughout the period.

Legal and Political Factors Resulting in Labour Conflict. Although the Conciliation Act of 1900 had been in force for six years, it had never been used in the coal industry. After the 1906 Lethbridge strike, the Deputy Minister of Labour, W.L. MacKenzie King, recommended to his department the passage of the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act which provided for compulsory arbitration if contract agreement had not been reached at the deadline of a strike. This act was the first major piece of legislation which involved the coal miners directly, since their recommendations to the coal operators during the 1906 contract negotiations included a provision almost identical to the terms of the IDI Act.

The Lethbridge strike provided a close degree of cooperation between the union officials, notably Frank Sherman, and the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. King; this contact contributed to the lessening of suspicion with government mediation. Unlike the 1903 strikes, when the Royal Commission placed the major portion of the blame on the "foreign unions," King and subsequent mediation officers of the Labour Department did not take an anti-union position.

This fact was most evident during the war when the Director of Coal Operations, Mr. W.H. Armstrong, himself a former coal operator, conceded almost every demand made by the union, including increased wages, a war bonus, and a cost of living commission. Moreover, the Federal Minister often met directly with Armstrong and kept in close contact with the union officials in his correspondence and working arrangements. When this type of working arrangements became threatened with the develop-





ment of the One Big Union, it was not surprising to expect the Government officials to work closely with the Coal Operators and the UMW Commission to force a closed shop against the OBU. In this case, despite the widespread support among rank and file workmen for the OBU, these three parties effectively blocked any efforts by the OBU to secure a wage increase and a contract. The resentment against the UMW officials as a result of this powerplay, particularly against Robert Levitt, the Binational Board Member for District 18, was a major factor in the subsequent failure of the UMW to reorganize the miners throughout Alberta and British Columbia and led to the attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to form a "Canadian" union in the form of the MWUC.

Government involvement at the Federal level was almost exclusively confined to the terms of the IDI Act of 1907 and the work of the Coal Director during the war. Provincial involvement centered around the passage of safety legislation and sporadic attempts by provincial premiers to bring about mediation during prolonged strikes. However, the working relationship made with Federal Government officials until the One Big Union entered District 18, was not evident at the provincial level. District 18 officials continually complained about the failure of the provincial governments to enforce safety legislation and prosecute companies not meeting safety requirements. The bitter Vancouver Island strike in 1912, for example, was caused by this very point, and resulted in a feeling by UMW officials and workmen that the coal companies and the provincial government acted and spoke with one voice. In Alberta, the resentment was not as strong against the government, although several District Presidents complained that safety requirements were not enforced by the government inspectors.



## THE NATURE OF TRADE UNIONISM IN DISTRICT 18: ITS EFFECTS

The influence of the different kinds of trade unions which competed for allegiance of the coal miners in District 18 can be examined in the light of (a) the relationship between the local union and the parent organization; (b) the role of the union in collective bargaining and contract negotiations; and (c) the kinds of issues involved in the bargaining process.

### Relationship Between the Local and the Parent Union

The relationship which existed between local unions established in the area known as District 18 and the parent unions (The Western Federation of Mines, the United Mine Workers, the One Big Union, and the Mine Workers Union of Canada) can be considered in terms of (a) the importance of union structure and union goals; (b) the initiative taken by the local for affiliation with the parent body; (c) union leadership as a factor in union strength; and (d) the extent of strike assistance.

Union Structure and Goals. The four unions which competed at various times for allegiance among the coal miners of District 18 and fundamentally different goals. In the case of the Western Federation of Miners, the leaders made some attempts to improve working conditions and to reform certain safety legislation, but it did not establish a collective bargaining process either on a local or a district basis. In many ways, the Western Federation was a social class movement, and its leaders reflected the ideological orientation to radicalism and socialist doctrines of confrontation. However, the 1903 strikes which it sponsored proved to the satisfaction of the miners that this tactic was unsuccessful in the coal industry and combined with the absence of strike aid, caused its downfall.

The most well-organized and best structured union in District 18



was the United Mine Workers. Aspiring to business union principles, the UMW attempted to improve wages and working conditions by establishing collective bargaining procedures with a district contract, and thereby abolish the company unionism of the Western Federation. Moreover, the UMW achieved a measure of unity and collective strength through its union structure. Strike action and agreements negotiated by the union officers had to be ratified by the workmen at each local. In its collective bargaining procedure, the UMW offered the coal operators a disciplined work force, stability within the industry by preventing wild-cat strikes, and a guarantee that the contract would be maintained.

On the other hand, the UMW was committed to income security, by which wage increases gained during peak production periods of upward price spirals would not be washed away during bad economic conditions and falling price levels. Moreover, the UMW fought for complete uniformity of wage scales throughout District 18, and refused to grant concessions on the basis of high freight rates, low selling prices, or excess production.

This consistency of purpose served to be both a strength and a weakness. While it helped to increase and maintain membership during the first 15 years when incomes were rising, it forced both mine workers and coal companies to reject the policy during periods of falling prices. Consequently, the rivalry with remnants of the One Big Union and the Mine Workers Union of Canada led to the collapse of the bargaining strategy developed before 1919.

The Initiative Taken by the Local for Affiliation. The history of labour conflict in the Western coal industry indicates that Canadian locals were affiliated to both Canadian and American parent unions.





There is no question that the Canadian locals freely and voluntarily sought membership in the American union, both in the case of the Western Federation and the United Mine Workers. Correspondence between Canadian locals and the two parents shows that the initiative came from the Canadian workers.

This factor is important because it meant a different form of relationship developed between the local or district in Canada and the parent union. On numerous occasions, district officials in Canada asked for and received direction from the UMW President or other officials in the United States. As a result some rival trade union leaders, notably the One Big Union and a few company officials who favoured non-union workers, alleged that the United Mine Workers was an American union dominating policy contrary to Canadian economic interests. The Western Coal Operators for the most part did not take this position because, in addition to the advantages already mentioned, they recognized that Canadian workmen did not view the Binational as a purely American union. Indeed, on several occasions, the WCOA appealed for intervention by the Binational President. It was only when District officials in Canada lost the confidence of the rank and file that the issue of American versus Canadian appealed to the Canadian workers to start a Canadian union in the form of the OBU.

The Role of Union Leadership. During the first decade of the United Mine Workers in District 18, the coal miners were fortunate in having an exceptionally strong leadership group in President Frank Sherman, Secretary A.J. Carter, and Peter Patterson and Harry Bousfield. These men were able to organize District 18 in the formative years and earned the respect of both workmen and operators alike. After Sherman's



death, with the exception of Clemm Stubbs, who retired to enter war service, the quality of leadership diminished as evidenced by the number of different presidents and their failure to maintain UMW principles in District 18. Moreover, personality factors influencing the district officials determined the degree of militancy in bargaining with the coal operators.

Even before the One Big Union rebellion, the officers of District 18 had trouble in keeping the men satisfied. Individual locals, particularly in the Crow's Nest Pass, complained that the officers acted arbitrarily, and failed to fight aggressively during a period of high increases in the cost of living. In part, this meant that the district had to maintain internal cohesion by obtaining immediate results for the membership, and when results and strike assistance both failed to appear, internal disorder and rebellion occurred.

Importance of Strike Assistance. A major principle of the UMW was to build up large strike funds to strengthen its bargaining position during contract negotiations. Because it attempted to organize all workmen in North America in order not to have nonunionized workmen competing in mines with unionized miners, the union extended large amounts of strike aid to Canadian workmen. A second factor was the desire not to have Canadian miners, through labour migration from District 18 or District 26, seeking jobs in unionized coal fields of the United States. One of the primary reasons why Canadian workers desired to join the labour organizations of the United States was the larger financial benefits offered through strike assistance. Throughout the history of District 18, the parent body of the United Mine Workers offered strike aid to Canadian workers in the millions of dollars. This



aid permitted the UMW to confront the coal operators for wage increases and better working conditions without the loss of income from work stoppage. In 1916 in Vancouver Island when strike assistance was cut off, and after 1919 when the UMW revoked the charter of District 18, the coal miners were clearly in an inferior position to the coal operators in forcing negotiations through the threat of strike, and interest in UMW principles decreased accordingly.

#### The Role of the Union in Collective Bargaining Procedures

The role played by the United Mine Workers in establishing collective bargaining procedures can be understood in the light of the union's overall strategy concerning wages and job security. When the UMW entered Western Canada, the miners made independent contracts with the company for a certain wage rate. After the establishment of District 18 and the short period of consolidation, the UMW acted as the bargaining agent for the workers with the individual companies where locals were established. However, the overall goal of the union was to establish a procedure by which the union could bargain with the employers through one contract. This meant, in effect, that the union wanted to bargain with a coal operators' association, rather than with individual companies.

In its endeavour to achieve this purpose, it was necessary firstly to organize locals at all companies in District 18, and secondly, to insure that no company could hire non-union help. Fortunately for the United Mine Workers, the Coal Operators formed an Association only four years after the UMW entered District 18, and in 1907, the UMW won its first district wide contract. Such a bargaining procedure meant that the union could fight for standardized wage scales, uniform working





conditions, and protection of the workmen from unsafe mines with the assurance that a strike throughout the district crippled the entire industry, rather than a single company.

After the district contract was secured, the union proposed a number of grievance and conciliation procedures. Procedures for settlement of grievances during the life of the contract were essentially of two kinds. The first procedure consisted of a representative of the union and the company receiving the case, and, failing agreement, appointment of an independent chairman, whose decision was final. The second procedure was based on the first, but involved more people. In this case, three persons from labour and three from management became involved, representing on the one hand, the local union, the District Union, the other miners and on the other hand, the company, the coal operators' association, and one other official. Again, in the absence of agreement, a third party chairman was appointed by the government.

A similar arrangement existed for conciliation boards and third party mediators. The passage of the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act in 1907, which provided for a compulsory conciliation board after the expiration of the contract (in the event of a strike), meant that the western coal industry saw a remarkable degree of third party intervention. However, other forms of mediation were used. These included informal groups such as Boards of Trade and Provincial Premiers, the National Minister of Labour, Mr. F.E. Harrison, Fair Wages Officer of the Department of Labour, and the Director of Coal Operations during the First World War. The use of conciliation boards under the IDI Act was greatest in the coal industry between 1907 and 1911, but decreased after that when the 1911 agreement inaugurated the use of an independent





chairman to handle grievance procedures during the life of the agreement, as noted earlier.

Two extraneous factors influenced the success or failure of third party participation in the bargaining process. The first was the general economic climate of the industry, as shown, for example during the War with the increased cost of living and in the twenties with falling prices. The second factor was the relative strength of the Coal Operators or the Union in terms of selling prices and availability of strike assistance. During depressed selling prices or in the summer when coal demand was low, the operators were more willing to face strike action and refuse union demands. Similarly, when the District Union had access to strike assistance, as determined by the strike activity in the recent past or in other UMW Districts, it was less willing to reach an immediate compromise settlement with third party assistance. Both of these factors suggest, therefore, that the explanation for the relative success or failure of conciliation procedures lies outside the nature of the third party machinery or the calibre of the third party participants.

#### Evolution of Issues Involved in the Bargaining Process

The heavy strike activity throughout the history of labour disputes in District 18 would appear on the surface to suggest either a number of different issues at stake for each strike, or a few basic issues which remained unresolved even after the settlement of the strike. Actually, both situations existed.

This paradox can be explained by the fact that although the United Mine Workers established District 18 in 1903 and became firmly established by 1911, the Union continued to form new locals throughout



the District's history, and often the first strikes at locals involved higher wages and union recognition. The basic issues then involved improved working conditions and better wages. However, at different collieries, the Union bargained for specific issues, depending, for example, on the state of the company mine and safety factors.

One issue which was not settled after the early strikes in the district was that involving the closed shop clause, although the UMW made it an issue in several district wide disputes. In fact, it was not until the One Big Union threatened the entire operations of the coal industry that Robert Livett, negotiating for the District Union, persuaded the coal operators to accept the closed shop clause as a means of destroying the rival union.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Study. The history of labour disputes in the Western Coal Industry is extremely complex. This study found that the nature of trade unionism and the environmental factors influencing the coal industry were the main factors contributing to the heavy labour unrest between 1900-1925. A limitation on the nature of a micro approach to labour history in one industry, as done in this thesis, is the paucity of studies on labour history generally and in other industries specifically. This means that it becomes exceedingly difficult to make comparative analyses of unions and the issues which accompanied strike activity.

In relation to this particular study, it is proposed that further study be carried out in the following areas:

- 1) trade unionism in District 18, 1925-present;
- 2) the role of District 18 in the Alberta Federation of Labour and the wider Canadian trade union movement;
- 3) a comparative study of District 18, District 26 and District 28.



# APPENDIX I

## STATISTICAL APPENDIX

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TABLE 1

Canadian Coal Production, 1867-1944

Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons
1867.....	631,320	1893.....	3,783,499	1919.....	13,919,096
1868.....	623,392	1894.....	3,847,070	1920.....	16,946,764
1869.....	687,825	1895.....	3,473,344	1921.....	15,057,493
1870.....	752,635	1896.....	3,745,716	1922.....	15,157,431
1871.....	3,033,152	1897.....	3,786,107	1923.....	16,990,571
1872.....		1898.....	4,173,108	1924.....	13,638,197
1873.....		1899.....	4,925,051	1925.....	13,134,968
1874.....	1,063,742	1900.....	5,777,319	1926.....	16,478,131
1875.....	1,039,974	1901.....	6,486,325	1927.....	17,426,861
1876.....	994,762	1902.....	7,466,681	1928.....	17,564,293
1877.....	1,036,670	1903.....	7,960,364	1929.....	17,496,557
1878.....	1,089,744	1904.....	8,254,595	1930.....	14,831,324
1879.....	1,126,497	1905.....	8,667,948	1931.....	12,243,211
1880.....	1,482,714	1906.....	9,762,601	1932.....	11,738,913
1881.....	1,537,106	1907.....	10,511,426	1933.....	11,903,344
1882.....	1,848,148	1908.....	10,836,311	1934.....	13,810,193
1883.....	1,818,684	1909.....	10,501,475	1935.....	13,888,006
1884.....	1,984,959	1910.....	12,909,152	1936.....	15,229,182
1885.....	1,920,977	1911.....	11,323,388	1937.....	15,835,954
1886.....	2,116,653	1912.....	14,512,829	1938.....	14,294,718
1887.....	2,429,330	1913.....	15,012,178	1939.....	15,692,698
1888.....	2,602,552	1914.....	13,637,529	1940.....	17,566,884
1889.....	2,658,303	1915.....	13,267,023	1941.....	18,225,921
1890.....	3,084,682	1916.....	14,483,395	1942.....	18,865,030
1891.....	3,577,749	1917.....	14,046,759	1943.....	17,859,057
1892.....	3,287,745	1918.....	14,977,926	1944.....	17,026,499

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 61

TABLE 2

Canadian Coal Exports, 1873-1944

Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons
1873.....	420,683	1897.....	986,130	1921.....	1,987,251
1874.....	310,988	1898.....	1,150,029	1922.....	1,818,582
1875.....	250,348	1899.....	1,293,169	1923.....	1,654,406
1876.....	248,638	1900.....	1,787,777	1924.....	773,246
1877.....	301,317	1901.....	1,573,661	1925.....	785,910
1878.....	327,959	1902.....	2,090,268	1926.....	1,028,209
1879.....	306,648	1903.....	1,954,629	1927.....	1,113,330
1880.....	432,188	1904.....	1,557,412	1928.....	863,941
1881.....	395,382	1905.....	1,635,287	1929.....	842,972
1882.....	412,682	1906.....	1,835,041	1930.....	624,512
1883.....	486,811	1907.....	1,894,074	1931.....	359,853
1884.....	474,405	1908.....	1,729,833	1932.....	235,487
1885.....	427,937	1909.....	1,588,099	1933.....	259,233
1886.....	520,703	1910.....	2,377,049	1934.....	306,335
1887.....	580,965	1911.....	1,500,639	1935.....	418,391
1888.....	588,627	1912.....	2,127,133	1936.....	411,574
1889.....	665,315	1913.....	1,562,020	1937.....	355,268
1890.....	724,486	1914.....	1,423,126	1938.....	353,181
1891.....	971,259	1915.....	1,766,543	1939.....	376,203
1892.....	823,733	1916.....	2,135,359	1940.....	504,893
1893.....	960,312	1917.....	1,733,156	1941.....	531,449
1894.....	1,103,694	1918.....	1,817,195	1942.....	815,585
1895.....	1,011,235	1919.....	2,070,050	1943.....	1,110,101
1896.....	1,106,661	1920.....	2,558,174	1944.....	1,010,240

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 62.



TABLE 3  
Origin of Coal for Canadian Consumption, 1902-1944

Year	Canadian		Imported	
	Short Tons	Per-centage	Short Tons	Per-centage
1902.....	5,376,413	53.1	4,734,559	46.9
1903.....	6,005,735	47.3	6,678,450	52.7
1904.....	6,697,183	47.9	7,297,482	52.1
1905.....	7,032,661	49.4	7,215,446	50.6
1906.....	7,927,560	50.5	7,758,325	49.5
1907.....	8,617,352	45.0	10,549,503	55.0
1908.....	9,156,478	47.3	10,195,424	52.7
1909.....	8,913,376	47.9	9,711,826	52.1
1910.....	10,532,103	50.2	10,433,123	49.8
1911.....	9,822,749	40.5	14,424,949	59.5
1912.....	12,335,696	46.0	14,549,104	54.0
1913.....	13,450,158	42.6	18,132,337	57.4
1914.....	12,214,403	45.5	14,637,920	54.5
1915.....	11,500,480	48.1	12,406,212	51.9
1916.....	12,349,036	41.3	17,517,820	53.7
1917.....	12,313,603	37.2	20,810,132	62.8
1918.....	13,160,731	37.8	21,611,101	62.2
1919.....	11,611,168	40.3	17,236,269	59.7
1920.....	14,025,566	42.9	18,668,741	57.1
1921.....	12,715,734	41.1	18,258,337	58.9
1922.....	13,044,352	50.2	12,962,139	49.8
1923.....	15,070,962	41.8	20,967,971	58.2
1924.....	12,529,358	42.8	16,714,143	57.2
1925.....	12,125,290	42.6	16,331,971	57.4
1926.....	15,036,296	47.7	16,565,555	52.3
1927.....	15,944,983	46.7	18,177,303	53.3
1928.....	16,487,807	50.0	16,515,582	50.0
1929.....	16,387,461	48.0	17,724,132	52.0
1930.....	14,052,671	43.3	18,412,039	56.7
1931.....	11,682,779	47.7	12,823,327	52.3
1932.....	11,212,701	49.0	11,654,492	51.0
1933.....	11,456,273	51.5	10,803,962	48.5
1934.....	13,236,406	51.1	12,651,163	48.9
1935.....	13,306,303	53.1	11,735,835	46.9
1936.....	14,508,652	53.3	12,719,515	46.7
1937.....	15,172,729	51.5	14,268,535	48.5
1938.....	13,800,094	52.3	12,573,872	47.6
1939.....	14,902,915	50.6	14,564,679	49.4
1940.....	16,666,234	49.5	17,036,090	50.5
1941.....	17,227,151	46.2	20,026,032	53.8
1942.....	17,725,761	42.0	24,529,361	58.0
1943.....	16,321,006	37.1	27,695,093	62.9
1944.....	15,660,803	35.7	28,166,201	64.3

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 62-63.



TABLE 4

Alberta Coal Production, 1886-1944

Date	Short Tons	Date	Short Tons	Date	Short Tons
1886.....	43,220	1906.....	1,385,000	1926.....	6,508,908
1887.....	74,152	1907.....	1,834,745	1927.....	6,936,780
1888.....	115,124	1908.....	1,845,000	1928.....	7,334,179
1889.....	97,364	1909.....	2,174,329	1929.....	7,147,250
1890.....	128,753	1910.....	3,036,757	1930.....	5,755,911
1891.....	174,131	1911.....	1,694,564	1931.....	4,564,290
1892.....	178,970	1912.....	3,446,349	1932.....	4,870,030
1893.....	230,070	1913.....	4,306,346	1933.....	4,714,784
1894.....	184,940	1914.....	3,821,739	1934.....	4,748,848
1895.....	169,885	1915.....	3,434,891	1935.....	5,462,973
1896.....	209,162	1916.....	4,638,604	1936.....	5,696,375
1897.....	242,163	1917.....	4,863,414	1937.....	5,551,682
1898.....	315,083	1918.....	6,148,620	1938.....	5,230,015
1899.....	309,600	1919.....	5,022,412	1939.....	5,518,105
1900.....	311,450	1920.....	6,908,923	1940.....	6,205,083
1901.....	340,275	1921.....	5,937,195	1941.....	6,970,064
1902.....	402,819	1922.....	5,976,432	1942.....	7,754,279
1903.....	495,893	1923.....	6,866,923	1943.....	7,677,982
1904.....	661,732	1924.....	5,203,713	1944.....	7,427,433
1905.....	931,917	1925.....	5,883,394		

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 68.

TABLE 5

Alberta Coal Exports, 1909-1944

Date	Short Tons	Date	Short Tons	Date	Short Tons
1909.....	114,101	1921.....	146,200	1933.....	18,493
1910.....	243,371	1922.....	113,165	1934.....	13,925
1911.....	40,884	1923.....	83,705	1935.....	32,785
1912.....	93,126	1924.....	44,678	1936.....	29,727
1913.....	139,536	1925.....	49,757	1937.....	47,013
1914.....	105,699	1926.....	48,012	1938.....	35,910
1915.....	25,050	1927.....	46,042	1939.....	35,373
1916.....	60,124	1928.....	52,976	1940.....	37,665
1917.....	90,239	1929.....	51,247	1941.....	34,890
1918.....	132,765	1930.....	44,235	1942.....	101,394
1919.....	121,264	1931.....	30,629	1943.....	459,551
1920.....	132,918	1932.....	27,030	1944.....	293,545

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 69.





TABLE 6

Alberta Production by Coals, 1906-1944

Date	"Domestic" Coal	"Steam" Coal	Date	"Domestic" Coal	"Steam" Coal
1906.....	602,780	782,220	1926.....	3,160,029	3,348,879
1907.....	639,335	1,195,410	1927.....	3,357,171	3,579,609
1908.....	584,334	1,250,666	1928.....	3,378,200	3,955,979
1909.....	763,673	1,410,656	1929.....	3,335,749	3,761,501
1910.....	878,011	2,153,746	1930.....	2,874,090	2,881,821
1911.....	964,700	729,864	1931.....	2,246,544	2,317,746
1912.....	1,341,389	2,104,960	1932.....	2,576,831	2,293,199
1913.....	1,763,225	2,543,121	1933.....	2,434,047	2,280,737
1914.....	1,697,401	2,124,338	1934.....	2,295,566	2,453,282
1915.....	1,682,922	1,751,969	1935.....	2,647,912	2,815,061
1916.....	2,172,801	2,475,803	1936.....	2,841,231	2,866,144
1917.....	2,537,829	2,325,585	1937.....	2,631,150	3,137,679
1918.....	3,035,061	3,113,559	1938.....	2,453,263	2,776,762
1919.....	3,611,009	2,411,403	1939.....	2,449,199	3,063,906
1920.....	3,359,309	3,549,615	1940.....	2,537,205	3,667,833
1921.....	2,943,141	2,994,054	1941.....	2,713,254	4,256,810
1922.....	3,086,669	2,889,763	1942.....	3,213,113	4,541,166
1923.....	3,161,741	3,703,289	1943.....	3,416,037	4,261,945
1924.....	3,096,660	2,107,053	1944.....	3,146,801	4,280,632
1925.....	3,156,359	2,727,035			

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 69.

TABLE 7

Saskatchewan Coal Production, 1892-1944

Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons	Year	Short Tons
1892.....	5,400	1910.....	181,156	1928.....	471,713
1893.....	8,325	1911.....	206,779	1929.....	580,189
1894.....	15,051	1912.....	225,342	1930.....	579,424
1895.....	15,769	1913.....	212,897	1931.....	662,836
1896.....	16,706	1914.....	232,299	1932.....	887,139
1897.....	25,000	1915.....	240,107	1933.....	927,649
1898.....	25,000	1916.....	281,300	1934.....	909,288
1899.....	25,000	1917.....	355,445	1935.....	921,785
1900.....	40,500	1918.....	346,847	1936.....	1,020,792
1901.....	45,000	1919.....	379,347	1937.....	1,049,348
1902.....	70,400	1920.....	335,222	1938.....	1,022,166
1903.....	116,703	1921.....	335,632	1939.....	960,000
1904.....	124,885	1922.....	382,437	1940.....	1,097,517
1905.....	107,596	1923.....	438,100	1941.....	1,322,763
1906.....	108,398	1924.....	479,118	1942.....	1,301,116
1907.....	151,232	1925.....	471,965	1943.....	1,665,972
1908.....	150,556	1926.....	439,803	1944.....	1,372,766
1909.....	192,125	1927.....	470,216		

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, p. 67.





British Columbia Coal Production, 1836-1945  
(long tons)

Date	Total	Vancouver Island	Crowsnest Pass	Inland
1836-1866.....	191,437	191,437		
1867.....	31,239	31,239		
1868.....	44,005	44,005		
1869.....	35,802	35,802		
1870.....	29,843	29,843		
1871.....				
1872.....	148,459	148,459		
1873.....				
1874.....	81,061	81,061		
1875.....	97,644	97,644		
1876.....	140,184	140,184		
1877.....	139,692	139,692		
1878.....	190,848	190,848		
1879.....	232,390	232,390		
1880.....	272,362	272,362		
1881.....	229,514	229,514		
1882.....	288,572	288,572		
1883.....	214,955	214,955		
1884.....	393,866	393,866		
1885.....	333,024	333,024		
1886.....	335,192	335,192		
1887.....	434,055	434,055		
1888.....	481,667	481,667		
1889.....	568,249	568,249		
1890.....	685,345	685,345		
1891.....	1,009,131	1,009,131		
1892.....	836,802	836,802		
1893.....	976,768	976,768		
1894.....	993,418	993,418		
1895.....	944,683	944,683		
1896.....	894,882	894,882		
1897.....	892,295	892,295		
1898.....	1,135,865	1,126,531	9,334	
1899.....	1,306,324	1,203,199	103,125	
1900.....	1,590,179	1,383,376	206,803	
1901.....	1,691,557	1,312,202	379,355	
1902.....	1,641,626	1,173,893	223,501	
1903.....	1,450,663	860,775	589,888	
1904.....	1,685,698	1,023,013	662,685	
1905.....	1,825,832	993,899	831,933	
1906.....	1,899,076	1,178,627	720,449	
1907.....	2,219,608	1,332,009	876,731	10,868
1908.....	2,109,387	1,200,582	883,205	25,600
1909.....	2,400,600	1,414,375	923,865	62,360
1910.....	3,139,235	1,616,030	1,365,119	158,086
1911.....	2,297,718	1,625,122	442,057	230,539
1912.....	3,025,709	1,558,240	1,261,212	206,257
1913.....	2,570,760	973,493	1,331,725	265,542
1914.....	2,166,428	1,072,314	955,183	138,931
1915.....	1,972,580	1,020,942	852,572	99,066
1916.....	2,485,580	1,492,761	882,270	110,549
1917.....	2,393,715	1,695,721	551,751	151,243
1918.....	2,578,724	1,666,211	732,864	179,649
1919.....	2,408,948	1,699,348	558,806	150,794
1920.....	2,696,774	1,698,254	847,389	151,131
1921.....	2,569,639	1,625,931	759,755	183,953
1922.....	2,580,915	1,754,656	554,361	271,898
1923.....	2,542,987	1,574,663	740,531	227,793
1924.....	1,987,533	1,486,332	273,518	227,683
1925.....	2,444,292	1,412,757	854,480	177,055
1926.....	2,330,036	1,293,175	848,448	188,413
1927.....	2,453,827	1,331,325	907,519	214,993
1928.....	2,526,702	1,277,533	1,001,523	247,646
1929.....	2,251,252	1,120,805	886,706	243,741
1930.....	1,837,130	988,805	689,236	209,089
1931.....	1,707,590	831,925	661,426	214,239
1932.....	1,534,975	749,006	537,875	198,094
1933.....	1,264,746	613,203	477,677	173,866
1934.....	1,347,090	574,508	627,619	144,963
1935.....	1,187,963	630,213	407,110	150,645
1936.....	1,346,471	713,037	470,606	162,828
1937.....	1,444,687	818,447	459,136	167,104
1938.....	1,309,428	684,398	434,068	190,962
1939.....	1,477,872	717,334	561,958	198,580
1940.....	1,667,827	732,659	776,518	158,650
1941.....	1,802,353	647,958	1,026,053	128,337
1942.....	1,938,158	738,600	1,047,713	151,845
1943.....	1,821,654	729,989	927,482	164,183
1944.....	1,933,639	689,714	1,120,665	123,260
1945.....	1,518,673	557,778	869,647	91,248

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 70-71.



British Columbia Coal Exports, Coal Used in Coke Production  
and Coke Exported, 1874-1945

Date	Coal Exports				Coal Used in Coke Production	Coke	
	Total	Vancouver Island	Crowsnest Pass	Inland		Production	Exports
1874.....	56,038	56,038					
1875.....	66,392	66,392					
1876.....	122,329	122,329					
1877.....	115,381	115,381					
1878.....	164,682	164,682					
1879.....	192,096	192,096					
1880.....	225,849	225,849					
1881.....	189,323	189,323					
1882.....	232,411	232,411					
1883.....	149,567	149,567					
1884.....	306,478	306,478					
1885.....	237,797	237,797					
1886.....	249,205	249,205					
1887.....	334,839	334,839					
1888.....	365,714	365,714					
1889.....	443,675	443,675					
1890.....	508,270	508,270					
1891.....	806,479	806,479					
1892.....	640,579	640,579					
1893.....	768,917	768,917					
1894.....	827,642	827,642					
1895.....	756,334	756,334					
1896.....	634,238	634,238				1,240	
1897.....	619,860	619,860				17,831	2,573
1898.....	752,863	752,863				35,361	3,205
1899.....	751,711	751,711				34,251	9,000
1900.....	914,184	906,215	7,963		150,584	85,149	51,757
1901.....	914,163	841,300	72,863		231,226	127,081	47,379
1902.....	776,809	675,033	101,776		244,232	128,015	38,780
1903.....	549,448	403,438	146,010		282,469	165,543	27,758
1904.....	533,593	415,405	118,188		432,070	238,423	100,281
1905.....	673,700	427,698	246,002		441,520	271,785	117,637
1906.....	679,829	448,966	230,863		381,773	199,227	61,704
1907.....	673,114	381,704	291,410		419,541	222,913	60,110
1908.....	597,157	330,328	266,829		431,538	247,399	37,314
1909.....	741,646	388,217	353,389	40	394,124	258,703	40,478
1910.....	1,175,099	420,442	751,087	3,570	339,189	218,029	8,730
1911.....	612,696	400,893	209,894	1,909	104,656	66,005	1,267
1912.....	967,138	411,830	551,742	3,566	396,905	264,333	50,257
1913.....	627,515	96,327	527,620	3,568	433,277	286,045	50,626
1914.....	602,707	210,719	389,383	2,605	355,461	234,577	54,313
1915.....	658,976	234,230	370,020	4,726	361,451	245,871	24,597
1916.....	844,045	451,403	386,933	5,684	401,487	267,725	34,377
1917.....	792,779	553,119	225,847	13,813	248,740	159,905	12,711
1918.....	811,238	457,048	342,218	11,972	276,479	188,967	17,404
1919.....	763,990	385,927	373,348	4,715	141,407	91,138	8,134
1920.....	799,940	316,432	479,342	41,166	101,649	67,792	31,718
1921.....	815,441	291,513	495,331	28,597	85,644	59,434	18,092
1922.....	762,118	356,088	333,451	72,579	69,072	45,835	15,524
1923.....	556,632	156,463	353,725	46,454	89,764	58,919	23,564
1924.....	209,686	118,554	70,674	20,458	48,007	30,615	8,232
1925.....	391,883	141,623	249,436	824	115,770	75,185	21,936
1926.....	293,925	96,409	197,233	283	142,838	93,448	26,296
1927.....	377,564	105,035	271,995	534	129,933	85,072	21,919
1928.....	332,445	89,516	240,023	2,906	92,607	61,370	13,902
1929.....	322,481	89,187	232,217	1,077	103,109	67,280	Not available
1930.....	143,211	65,279	76,752	1,180	98,174	65,810	22,672
1931.....	81,007	37,774	43,023	210	98,411	65,410	16,672
1932.....	59,702	31,757	27,665	280	42,536	29,545	12,855
1933.....	38,345	19,686	18,588	71	8,435	5,444	4,455
1934.....	45,535	22,003	23,532		47,894	22,182	6,609
1935.....	54,195	31,104	23,091		37,178	24,170	15,563
1936.....	75,435	36,870	38,565		11,534	30,370	14,686
1937.....	89,220	46,199	43,018	3	67,634	43,215	24,079
1938.....	91,445	44,045	47,400		77,335	48,760	23,531
1939.....	98,705	40,885	57,820		78,228	51,205	21,970
1940.....	154,287	79,597	74,690		88,418	59,788	21,575
1941.....	122,687	38,055	84,632		125,792	83,954	29,737
1942.....	190,994	64,414	126,580		128,441	85,555	31,224
1943.....	178,696	24,457	154,239		116,485	77,355	35,338
1944.....	210,440	54,197	156,225	18	113,056	75,317	35,334
1945.....	144,691	32,763	111,928		89,821	64,774	28,012

SOURCE: Report of the Royal Commission on Coal, 1946, pp. 72-73.



TABLE 10  
LOCALS IN THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA, 1923.\*

<u>District Number</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Locals</u>
1	Pennsylvania(Anthracite).....	150
2	Central Pennsylvania(Bituminous).....	224
4	Connellsville Coke Region(Pennsylvania).....	14
5	Western Pennsylvania(Bituminous).....	221
6	Ohio.....	474
7	Pennsylvania(Anthracite).....	53
8	Indiana.....	18
9	Pennsylvania(Anthracite).....	92
10	Washington.....	18
11	Indiana.....	197
12	Illinois.....	338
13	Iowa.....	76
14	Kansas.....	102
15	Colorado.....	35
16	Maryland.....	5
17	West Virginia.....	253
18	Alberta, Canada.....	30
19	Tennessee.....	87
20	Alabama.....	20
21	Arkansas and Oklahoma.....	99
22	Wyoming.....	39
23	Kentucky.....	87
24	Michigan.....	13
25	Missouri.....	47
26	Nova Scotia, Canada.....	29
27	Montana.....	27
28	Vancouver Island.....	-
29	Montana.....	2
30	Kentucky.....	4
	Total.....	<u>2,754</u>

Source: UMW. Proceedings, Vol. 1, 1924, pp. 52-91





TABLE 11  
AVERAGE PAID-UP MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF  
AMERICA.\*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Membership</u>
1890 .....	20,912
1891 .....	17,044
1892 .....	19,376
1893 .....	14,244
1894 .....	17,628
1895 .....	10,871
1896 .....	9,617
1897 .....	3,973
1898 .....	32,902
1899 .....	61,887
1900 .....	115,321
1901 .....	198,024
1902 .....	175,367
1903 .....	247,240
1904 .....	251,006
1905 .....	264,950
1906 .....	230,667
1907 .....	260,740
1908 .....	252,018
1909 .....	265,274
1910 .....	231,392
1911 .....	256,256
1912 .....	289,269
1913 .....	377,682
1914 .....	333,333
1915 .....	311,786
1916 .....	322,911
1917 .....	367,381
1918 .....	409,844
1919 .....	391,339 a
1920 .....	376,447
1921 .....	442,057
1922 .....	285,893 b
1923 .....	445,734

\*Does not include exonerated members. Proceedings, UMWA, 1924. Vol11, p.48  
a Eight months period.  
b Includes the strike period. All members exonerated from dues and assessments when on strike.

Source: "Report of Secretary Treasurer," Proceedings, for years shown.



TABLE 12  
OFFICERS FOR DISTRICT 18, 1903-1925

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice-President</u>	<u>Secretary-Treasurer</u>
Frank Sherman (1903-1909)	John Galvin (1903-1909)	J. Howbrook (1903-1907)
William Powell (1910-1912)	Clemm Stubbs (1910-1912)	J.A. MacDonald (1907-1909)
Clemm Stubbs (1913-1914)	J.O. Jones (1913-1914)	A.J. Carter (1910-1917)
John Smith (1914-1915)	William Graham (1914-1916)	
William Phillips (1915-1916)		
William Graham (1916-1917)	Thomas Biggs (1916-1917)	
Thomas Biggs (1917-1918)	P.M.Christophers (1917-1918)	Ed Browne (1917-1919)
P.M.Christophers (1918-1919)	Alex McFagan (1918-1919)	
C. Williamson (1921-1922)	William Ryan (1921-1925)	Robert Peacock (1921-1925)
William Sherman (1922-1925)		

From August 1919 to June 1921, District 18 was run by a Binational Commission consisting of Samuel Ballantyne, Samuel Caddy and William Dalrymple, with assistance from Robert Livett of District 18.



TABLE 13  
TRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL UNIONS OF THE  
WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS

Locality	Organization	Date of Formation
Lethbridge, NWT	Miners' Union, WFM	August 22, 1899
Extension, BC	Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association, No. 15	February 6, 1901
Fernie, BC	Miners' Union, WFM	April, 1899
Kamloops, BC	Miners' Union, No. 112, WFM	October 1, 1901
Nanaimo	Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association, No. 15	1890
Rossland	Miners' Union, No. 38, WFM	July 16, 1895
South Wellington	Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association	March 1901

Source: Labour Gazette, Vol. 2, No. 6, December 1901, p. 376



TABLE 14  
STRIKE ASSISTANCE PAID TO DISTRICT 18,  
UNITED MINE WORKERS, 1903-1927  
(in dollars)

Year	District 18	District 28
1904	1,457.98	
1905	2,842.20	
1906	25,200.00	
1907	2,100.00	
1908	8,200.00	
1909	10,000.00	
1911	381,000.00	
1912	121,500.00	30,000.00
1913		584,500.00
1914		558,000.00
1920	2,000.00	
1923	53,000.00	
1926	1,000.00	
1927	1,000.00	

Source: "Report of Secretary Treasurer," UMW, Proceedings,  
for years shown.





## APPENDIX II

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

#### A. Organizations

AFL	American Federation of Labour
ALU	American Labour Union
CFL	Canadian Federation of Labour
CFM	Canadian Federation of Miners
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
OBU	One Big Union
TLC	Trades and Labour Congress
UMW	United Mine Workers of America
WCOA	Western Coal Operators Association
WCCOA	Western Canada Coal Operators Association
WFM	Western Federation of Miners

#### B. Publications

<u>DL</u>	<u>District Ledger</u>
<u>LG</u>	<u>Labour Gazette</u>
<u>UMWJ</u>	<u>United Mine Workers Journal</u>
<u>WCCR</u>	<u>Western Canada Coal Review</u>



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